
SIGNET · AE5337 · (CANADA $3.95) · U.S. $2.95
WHEN THE SCREAMING RISES AND THE BLOOD FLOWS, IT'S TIME TO FEAR AGAIN!
A NOVEL BY SIMON HAWKE
BASED ON THE SCREENPLAY WRITTEN BY RON KURZ
BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY VICTOR MILLER
FRIDAY THE 13TH PART II

Prologue

Some nightmares never go away, even after you wake up. Alice thrashed beneath her sweat soaked sheets, crying out and moaning in her sleep, pursued by some hideous thing she never could have dreamed of because although she was seized in the grip of a terrifying nightmare that had been no dream. This nightmare had been real.

It had happened earlier that summer at Camp Crystal Lake. A few rustic cabins on a quiet lake shore.

A peaceful atmosphere that was shattered one night by frenzied throat rending screams that wouldn't stop. Her own screams. She found Bill hanging on the door of the work shed, impaled on a coat hook. His ruined body hacked and stabbed. His eye transfixed by an arrow. There was blood everywhere. Screaming, she ran back to the main cabin where she bolted the doors and threw up a barricade.

She had ever been so frightened in all her life. She huddled in the kitchen of the cabin, afraid to move, afraid to breathe. And then Brenda's blood caked body came crashing through the window, hurled with superhuman force to land lifeless on the floor. Blood was matted in her hair. Her arms and legs were trussed up with rope and her body was pierced with stab wounds.

Alice screamed as though she'd never stop. All of them were dead. All her friends. Neddy with his throat slashed. Annie, butchered the same way. Jack, with an arrow driven through his throat.

Marcie's skull, split by an axe. She fled, terror-stricken into the night, running towards the headlights of the approaching Jeep, thinking that it was Steve Christie, coming back from town, never suspecting he was dead. She pulled up short as, not Steve, but a stranger got out of the jeep. The stranger was a tall blonde woman, dressed in dark slacks and a white woolen sweater. And if Alice hadn't been so terrified, she might have noticed the particular tightness around the woman's mouth, the slightly glazed unfocused look about her eyes, the telltale bulge on her belt beneath her sweater.

"Who are you?" Alice cried, scared out of her wits. The woman smiled. It was a strained smile that came too quickly.

"Why, I'm Mrs. Voorhees," she had said, "An old friend of the Christies'."

"No," Alice twisted in the tangled sheets and cried out in her sleep, trying to make herself wake up.

Somewhere deep in her subconscious mind, she knew it was a dream and she tried to wake up so she could escape from it. But like the reality that fueled the dream, the nightmare was tenacious and it would not let go.

"No… no…" she shouted, reliving the past in her dream, pulling

back from Mrs. Voorhees.

"They're dead! They're all dead!"

"All right, I'll go look," said Mrs. Voorhees calmly, as if she did not believe her.

"No… don't leave me. They'll kill you too!"

"No!" she cried again in her sleep. She tossed and turned in the torn up bed, vainly trying to wrench herself out of the dream.

In the cabin, they stood together over Brenda's mutilated body. A strange look came over Mrs. Voorhees' face. An intense, distant expression. She suddenly looked like an altogether different person as she spoke about the mystery of Crystal Lake. The savage, unsolved murders of two young summer camp counselors.

Did you know that a boy drowned the year before those two others were killed? Said Mrs. Voorhees, her eyes glazing over. Her voice became bitter. Her mouth twisted into a sneer.

"The counselors weren't paying enough attention!

"They were making love while that young boy drowned!"

Her voice took on a frightening edge, an edge of madness.

"His name was Jason." She said. She started to walk toward Alice, her eyes glittering with rage.

"I was working the day it happened, preparing meals. I was the cook."

Suddenly, she grabbed Alice by the shoulders, her grip, astonishingly powerful, her fingers digging in like talons.

"Jason should have been watched, every minute! He wasn't a very good swimmer."

Her eyes seemed to blaze and her lips drew back from her teeth in a savage snarl as she shook Alice hard enough to make her teeth rattle.

"You let him drown! You never paid any attention!"

She shoved Alice away hard and lifted up her sweater, revealing the large hunting knife in the leather sheath on her belt.

"Look what you did to him!" she hissed as she pulled out the knife and lunged at Alice.

In desperation, Alice grabbed the first thing that came to hand: a fireplace poker and swung it at the madwoman with all her might. Mrs. Voorhees grunted as the poker struck her. She staggered and fell to the floor. Alice ran screaming out into the night.

Behind her, Mrs. Voorhees slowly rose, her eyes wild, burning with delight of madness. She spoke in the voice of a small boy—the voice of her son, Jason.

"Kill her, Mommy. Kill her… Don't let her get away, Mommy. Don't let her live."

And in her own voice, she answered with grim determination.

"I won't, Jason. I won't."

Alice whimpered in her sleep, her fingers clutching at the sheets spasmodically, her head trashing back and forth. In the dream, she fled screaming from the crazy woman but there was no escape.

Cornered at the lake, she had fought with desperation, finally managing to break free of the insane killer and pick up the machete she had dropped during their struggle. Without even realizing what she was doing, Alice swung the machete with all her might.

She cried out in her sleep at the nightmarish figure of the woman's head coming off—a vision that had plagued her dreams ever since that awful night. She had awakened in the country hospital, unable to remember how she got there. She remembered scrambling back from Mrs. Voorhees decapitated body, pumping blood onto the ground.

She got into a boat and pushed off from the shore, feeling numb with shock, wanting only to get as far away from that frightening cadaver as she could. She drifted slowly out into the middle of the lake until the sun came up, dissipating the gray mist and sending shimmers of light racing across the surface.

Half in a daze, she seemed to recall seeing the police car pulling up to the dock, the officers getting out and calling to her. And then, the rotting corpse of a small boy broke the surface of the lake with a blood freezing scream. The corpse wrapped his arms around her, pulling her over the side of the boat and dragging her down into the water.

"Two of my men pulled you out of the lake," Sergeant Tierney had told her, "We thought you were dead too. Do you remember very much?"

"The boy," Alice had said, "Is he dead too?"

"Who?" Said Tierney.

"The boy!" She repeated, "Jason!"

The policemen hesitated, frowning.

"Jason?"

"In the lake," she insisted, "the one who attacked me. The one who pulled me underneath the water."

"Ma'am," said Tierney with a worried look, "we didn't find any boy."

"Then… he's still there," said Alice, her voice echoing in her mind like an ominous warning.

Still there… still there… still there…

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She awoke with a start, gasping for breath and crying out. It took her a moment to realize that she was safe in her own room, that it had only

been a nightmare, all the more terrifying because it had really happened to her. She placed her hand against her chest and felt her heart pounding away like a jackhammer. When would she finally be able to find peace?

She crawled out of her bed and went into the bathroom. She leaned against the sink. Her knees felt weak. The dreams exhausted her—leeched all the energy away and left her feeling like some sort of zombie, staggering around in a trance.

She wasn't getting enough sleep. She couldn't remember the last time she had a good 8 hours, or even 6 or 4. Yes, she could before the nightmares started, before Camp Crystal Lake. Glancing at her reflection in the bathroom mirror, she realized how terrible she looked. She was losing weight.

There were deep bags beneath her eyes. Her hands were shaking and the slightest noise made her jump. When the phone rang, she almost had a heart attack. She took a deep breath, trying to calm herself as it rang again. And then, she went to answer it. She already knew who it would be.

"Hello?" she said with resignation as she sank down onto the couch.

"Hi, Mom. I know… I'm sorry. I meant to call you but I fell asleep."

She realized how emotionally drained she sounded and tried to inject a note of cheerfulness into her voice.

"Really, Mom… I'm fine. I just need a little time alone, that's all. I—"

Her mom interrupted as she always did and Alice tried to listen patiently. Her mother didn't understand. How could she ever understand? How could anyone understand unless they had been there? Unless they had seen what she had seen?

"I know you and Dad worry and I appreciate that," she said as soon as her Mother took a breath.

"I—"

Her mother interrupted once again and this time, Alice didn't let it pass.

"Come on, Mom," she said sharply, "We've been through all this before. I just have to put my life back together and this is the only way I know how."

Her mother wasn't listening. She never listened. Never even tried to.

"Mom, please?" Alice said, exasperated. "It's late and I don't want to get into it. I'll call you tomorrow. Bye."

She hung up the phone. Why couldn't anybody understand?

Alright… maybe she had imagined it. How could the boy had

come up from the bottom of the lake to drag her under? He had drowned years ago. His body would have decomposed long since. And if he had lived, he would have been a full grown man by now.

Yet.

She was certain she had seen something. According to the police report, she was hysterical when the officers swam out to get her. They said that she had fought them, clawing at them, screaming at them to let her go.

She didn't remember any of that. Perhaps she had fallen out of the boat and they had seen it. And when they swam out to rescue her, her tortured mind had deceived her into thinking that it wasn't a policeman trying to pull her to safety, but a rotting corpse trying to pull her under.

Anyway, that's what the psychiatrist had suggested and it seemed to make sense. After what she had been through, it wasn't surprising that her mind should have come a bit unhinged. But she wasn't really sure. She knew she had seen something and lately, ever since she had returned to Crystal Lake, she couldn't shake the feeling that she was being watched. As if there was something out there, waiting for her.

Her mother thought that she was going crazy. Why, after all the horrible things that had happened to her there, would she want to return to the town of Crystal Lake?

Every night, her mother called.

Every night, it was the same discussion. Always the same old arguments.

Come home, honey… come home where we can take care of you, her mother always said, we'll see this thing through together. We'll get the finest doctors. We'll do whatever it takes.

Her parents simply didn't understand.

What it took was going back to where it had all happened. The camp itself had been shut down and the buildings had all been condemned but she had come back to the town of Crystal Lake where people did not know who she was since her picture had been kept out of the papers when it happened.

There, she could confront her private demons by herself, confront them and beat them.

Or.

Be consumed by them.

She had no choice. There was just no other way.

In a sense, she had never really left the place. After being discharged from the hospital, she had gone home to her parents but each night after she fell asleep, she would up back at Camp Crystal Lake again, reliving the horror. She would try to stay awake, knowing

that it was impossible, knowing that she had to get some sleep but dreading it because she knew what sleep would bring. And when inevitably she would finally fall asleep from sheer exhausting, the nightmare would begin again.

She tried explaining it to her parents when they told her it was foolish to go back.

What do you mean "go back"? she shouted at them in exasperation. Don’t you understand? I’ve never left. I’m still trapped there. I’ll never get away!

When she got up from the couch and went back toward the bathroom, her eyes fell on the sketches she had been working on earlier in the day. She had done them in charcoal—shades of grey and black.

There was a time not so long ago when she had been a talented, versatile artist, she had enjoyed drawing still life studies and landscapes, full figures and portraits. But the last thing she had done that had looked anything like her former work was the portrait she had drew of Steve back at Camp Crystal Lake. That’s when the nightmare started.

Ever since, all her drawings came out looking like this: dark, gloomy, and foreboding. Grey shading into darker grey shading. Into black. Studies of faces with wide eyes and bulging mouths open in soundless screams.

She had once seen a documentary on television about children who had suffered traumas from abuse. Their drawings didn’t look anything like children’s drawings. No sunlit houses with picket fences and gardens and stick figure people drawn in warm, bright colors.

No.

Those drawings looked like hers: dark, savage, terrifying. The subconscious mind living the violence that had been done to it and crying out for help.

She went into the bathroom and turned on the shower. The phone rang once again. Sighing, she went back into the living room and picked up the phone. Why couldn’t her mother just leave her alone? Why couldn’t she understand that the only chance she had of beating this thing was to come back and face it, to prove to herself once and for all that it was over. That there were no more monsters lurking in the dark.

"Mom," she said into the phone.

There was no answer on the other end.

"Hello?"

Still, no response. It was not her mother. She could her only the sound of heavy breathing. She slammed the phone down and backed away from it, swallowing hard, trying to compose herself.

Its all right, she tried to tell herself, there's nothing to worry about. It was probably just some kids playing games. Nothing to be afraid of. People who called other people up just to breathe heavily into the phone weren't really dangerous… were they?

She went over to the window and pulled back the drape, taking a look outside. It was dark in the streets of Crystal Lake were rain slicked. There didn't appear to be anyone out there but it was hard to tell with all those shadows.

In her present state of mind, every shadow seemed to be a prowler—a huge shape lurking in the darkness, waiting, watching. Her heart started to beat faster.

Okay… this is ridiculous, she told herself, the phone rings and all of a sudden, you're jumping at shadows. It was probably a wrong number.

She checked the chain and deadbolt on the door then she checked the hall. She knew it seemed foolish to be creeping around her own apartment but she couldn't shake the awful feeling that had suddenly come over her. The almost certain feeling that she was not alone.

She checked the bedroom then looked in the kitchen. She felt a cool breeze. The window was wide open. A knot formed in her stomach. She was almost certain that she had shut it earlier. She suddenly felt short of breath. There was a tightness in her chest. She couldn't take her eyes away from the gently blowing curtains of the wide-open window.

Slowly, she moved toward the window, picking up an ice pick from the sideboard on the sink and holding it like a knife, ready for stabbing. She shut her eyes and took a deep breath.

Suddenly, something came flying through the window straight at her and she gasped and recoiled with shock then leaned back against the refrigerator with relief when she realized it had only been the cat.

"Oh… it's you," she said, exhaling heavily, feeling foolish for overreacting like that. Obviously, she must have left the window open earlier and the cat had gotten out that way.

I've just got to calm down, she thought, I've got to relax before I lose my mind and run screaming out into the street.

She put the ice pick down on the counter then ran a little water into the tea kettle, which she sat on the stove, turning the burner on high. She took down a box of teabags and got out a cup and spoon.

The cat rubbed against her legs, meowing.

"You wanna eat, huh? Okay."

She went back to the refrigerator and opened it.

The severed and bloody head of Mrs. Voorhees was resting on

the top shelf between the milk and the half empty box of chocolate graham crackers. The mouth was open and the tongue protruded from between the rotting teeth like a dead slug. The stench of decomposing flesh was overpowering.

Alice threw her hands up to her face and screamed. She backed away, turning to run and suddenly, a massive arm was clamped across her throat, throttling her scream, choking it off. She saw the flash of the ice pick she had left lying on the counter and she had only the briefest instant to register the awful realization that her worst nightmare were coming true before the point of the ice pick was driven through her temple. She felt a sharp, searing, while hot pain then she fell lifeless to the floor.

The tea kettle started whistling. The killer took it off the burner and conscientiously turned off the gas.

Chapter 1

FIVE YEARS LATER

"Alright, keep your eyes peeled. I think we're getting close," said Jeff, pushing his cap back on his head and watching the street signs as they entered the town of Crystal Lake.

He drove the midnight blue 4x4 with the raised body very slowly, being careful not to exceed the posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. He had bought it for his 18th birthday after taking several years to save up enough money for the down payment. It was still brand new, not even 1,000 miles on it yet. He knew that a lot of these small towns boosted their revenues at the expense of tourists and vacationers coming through. City drivers who were accustomed to a faster pace and therefore had a hard time driving slowly in the country. His father had cosigned the loan on the condition that he keep a clean driving record and Jeff intended to keep up his end of the bargain.

Beside him, Sandra, a pretty 17-year-old blond checked the direction she had scrawled on a piece of loose-leaf paper. She glanced up looking through the windshield, brushing her thick curly hair out of her eyes as she checked for landmarks.

"Hey, there's a gas station," she said, recognizing one.

Jeff pulled over to the curb across the street from the gas station.

"Come on, let's call Ted," he said, opening the door.

Ted had told them to get to the service station in town and call him from there so he could come out and meet them. Otherwise, he warned them they'd only get hopelessly confused.

You can get lost on those little back roads, he had told them. Believe me, I know. Just give me a call from the Gulf station you get into town and I'll come out and get you. You can't miss it. Just look for the big old orange sign.

Jeff and Sandra ran across the street to the phone booth in the gas station. Jeff fished around in the pockets of his jeans until he found a quarter. He deposited it and dialed Ted's number. Sandra put her hands in the pockets of her khaki hiking shorts and took a look around the town of Crystal Lake.

Ted had been right when he told them there wasn't much to see.

"Oh, it's a little old hick town," he had said, "but what the hell, it's home, right?"

Actually, it was only a summer home that had belonged to Ted's parents. Ted used to spend his vacations here but recently, his parents preferred to get away to Europe. Ted usually worked at

counseling jobs at various camps so the house in Crystal Lake was closed most of the year. It was on the market but apparently there was no great rush to buy homes in this town.

Looking around, Sandra thought she could understand why the town looked dead. Still, the prospect of spending a couple of weeks at the counselors training center, and then having a big empty house to play in for a few days before the summer camp season got started seemed like a lot of fun. They might meet some nice people at this training thing and then, when it was over, there'd be some time to party with them. She wondered what the director of the training center Paul Holt would be like. She hoped he wouldn't be a jerk. Ted had said he had known him from working with him several summers before.

"Hey, Teddy Buddy!" Jeff hollered into the phone, "We just rolled in. Huh? Yeah, Sandra's here. You coming down to get us or what?"

Jeff looked at her with a wry expression. After all the talk about picking them up in town and guiding them back to the training center to keep them from getting lost, now it seemed like Ted couldn't come and meet them after all.

"Okay… give me directions," Jeff said with resignation. As he started scribbling them down, Sandra noticed an old man coming toward them, pushing an old bicycle. He looked like a real geek. His body was like a scarecrow's and his face was grizzled with stubble. He wore a battered old felt hat and a dark green stained work shirt with a ratty looking vest and shapeless slacks. His bicycle looked almost as bad as he did. It looked as if he had picked it up from a trash heap. It was all rattley and rusty. The paint was chipped, and the handlebars were twisted. The fenders were rubbing on the wheels. The chain guard was loose, and the seat was worn clean through. As the old man came toward them, Sandra nudged Jeff to take a look at him. Jeff glanced at him quickly, grinned at her, then went back listening to Ted.

"Uh-huh… right," he said, repeating the directions as he scribbled them down.

"Out on the North Road?… Right after the first fork?… Look for a Dairy Queen?... Left over a covered bridge?"

The old man hesitated when he passed them, and a strange look came over his face. He glanced at Jeff and then he looked at Sandra, his eyes glazing over as if he were listening to something no one else could hear. His name was Ralph and he was the town crazy. No one ever paid any attention to him except when he got drunk and careened around the town on his bicycle and preaching the gospel at the top of his lungs and threatening to veer out into traffic or crash through somebody's store window. He never seemed to make it around the corner of Harlan's hardware store, and he would inevitable

smash into Harlan's front steps and wind up in a tangled heap, pinned beneath his bike, writhing on the ground and screaming. Then someone would pay attention to him. Harlan would come running out and start jumping up and down and shouting at him, calling him names like "sleezeball" and "egg-sucker" and threatening to wrap that trashed out bike around his scrawny neck. A crowd would usually gather or as much as a crowd as you could get together in Crystal Lake and the sheriff would have to come by and pull Harlan off Ralph and take Ralph down to the jail to dry out.

It was always like that—the same routine. They paid attention to him when he had too much to drink but they never paid attention to him when it really counted—when he tried to warn them. He had seen things out in the woods, and he knew what was going to happen if they started having kids out there again. If they started trespassing on HIS turf, just like the last time, he thought, when he'd tried to tell them what would happen, and they didn't listen.

"I told the others!" Ralph said, his voice hollow and eerie, his eyes bulging wildly as he approached Sandra and Jeff with maniac Intensity. "They didn't believe me! You're all doomed!"

Sandra backed away from him uneasily. Jeff did a double take, not sure of how to react but Ralph had already moved way. Jeff and Sandra exchanged glances and Jeff sighed, rolled his eyes and shook his head.

"What?" he said, talking to Ted, "Oh, no. It was nothing. Go ahead… Wait a minute, Ted… slow down, okay?... So alright… covered bridge… I got that. Uh-huh… then pass an old cemetery…"

Sandra looked at the ineligible way he was scrawling the directions and made a face.

"We'll never find the place," she muttered, looking around

"Yeah… left," said Jeff, "Then a half mile farther on a dirt road…"

"Oh, my God!" said Sandra, noticing for the first time the big black wrecker and pulled up to their pickup truck.

"They're towing us!"

Jeff spun around and saw that the driver of the wrecker already had the pickup hoisted and was walking toward the door and preparing to drive off.

"Ted, I'll call you back!" Jeff shouted into the receiver and then dropped it, leaving it dangling as he ran with Sandra to the truck.

"HEY!" he yelled as the truck driver started up the wrecker.

"Hey, wait!"

If the driver heard or saw them, he paid no attention. He shifted the wrecker into first and slowly pulled away, towing their pickup truck behind him.

"Hey! Stop!" Shouted Jeff, chasing the wrecker, "It's MY truck you're towing! Hey! Asshole!"

"You can't do this!" Sandra cried, running hard to keep up with Jeff, "All our stuff's in there!"

Jeff caught up to the truck and started banging on the driver's window but the man stared straight ahead with a deadpan expression.

"Hey! Hey Asshole!" Jeff yelled, trying to stay even with the truck. The driver could easily have pulled away, but he continued on at a pace just fast enough to make Jeff and Sandra run hard to keep enough but not so fast as to leave them behind.

He drove the wrecker off the main street and down a tree-lined residential avenue, speeding up a bit as Jeff and Sandra struggled to keep up. Then suddenly, he pulled up in front of a large Victorian house and stopped. Jeff and Sandra came to a halt, out of breath completely taken aback at the sight of Ted, standing on the front lawn and grinning at them with his hands on his hips.

"Welcome to God's country!" Ted said, laughing.

For a moment, both Jeff and Sandra stared at him, then realization dawned and they charged him, shaking and pummeling him playfully.

"You rat shit!" said Jeff, "You set us up!"

Ted laughed and waved to the driver of the wrecker, who was winching down their pickup and grinning at them.

"Thanks, Max!"

Max had gave them a wink.

"Max owns the station. He's crazy too."

"I should have known," said Sandra, punching him on the shoulder.

"Its great you guys could make it!" Ted said, putting his arms around them, "It's gonna be like old times!"

"That's what I'm afraid of," Jeff said, laughing. He remembered only too well what it had been like the summer they had spent together before they had gone off to different schools. Ted hadn't changed at all. He was still as skinny as a beanpole. He still wore loud clothes like the yellow checked shirt he had on and he still played practical jokes.

"Come on, help me load my gear," said Ted, "We'll split for the camp."

They helped Ted carry his pack and duffle bags to the pickup and tossed them in the back. Then, they piled in and Ted directed them on the road through Crystal Lake and out of town.

"So, what's the scoop?" said Jeff as they left town and headed down a winding country lake that led toward the lake.

Sandra sat between the two of them, watching the scenery and working the radio. Ted was hunched up against the door. His hand on

the outside of the truck, drumming a beat in time to the music.

"Well, I know the guy who runs the course," he said, "He's okay. Kinda macho though, you know. He takes the whole thing very seriously. We'll probably get a brownie badge to wear—" he dropped his voice theatrically—"If we survive."

"If we survive?" Sandra exclaimed, looking at Ted.

"I didn't tell ya?" Ted said innocently, "I'm gonna be a second assistant."

"Oh, God…" Jeff and Sandra both said at once, rolling their eyes in mock horror.

After a while, they turned off the country road and headed up a narrow, graded dirt road, leading back into the woods. It was barely wide enough for two vehicles to pass each other, even if they went very slowly and carefully. Ted was rattling off a series of bad jokes, when Jeff came around a turn and slammed on the brakes.

"So the bear wiped his ass with the rabbit…"

Sandra had to straight arm the dashboard to keep from getting thrown forward.

"What the hell is that?" he said, looking out through the windshield.

There was a large, dead tree limb blocking the road but there weren't any trees on the side of the road big enough to have dropped a limb that size. There were just small pines and oaks and scrub brush.

"Where'd that sucker come from?" Jeff said, getting out of the truck.

Ted led Sandra out and then slammed the door, coming around the front of the truck to examine the tree limb.

It was too big to drive over. They'd wind up dragging it along with them if they tried and Jeff wasn't about to risk ruining the undercarriage of his brand-new truck.

He stood there, staring at it and shaking his head. Ted shrugged and bent down to grasp the tree limb by a thick branch that was sticking out. He grunted as he tried to move it. It was a hell of a lot heavier than it looked.

"Come on, give me a hand!"

"It looks like somebody dragged it out here," Jeff said, pointing to some drag marks by the side of the road. As they both bent down to move the tree limb, Sandra wandered off the road and down a narrow path she'd spotted. She'd thought at first that it might be an animal run. She knew that dense woods were not the best place to look for wildlife because animals needed a greater variety of vegetation like that found in clearings, near rivers and streams and at the edge of forests.

Animals were creatures of habit and they commonly used the same routes called "trails" and "runs" to get to their feeding and

watering areas. New ones were barely noticeable, being a little more than pushed down undergrowth that could easily escape a casual glance. Older ones had been trampled down often enough to kill some of the undergrowth and leave a narrow dirt path.

Initially, Sandra thought she had spotted a very old run because the path was well traveled and worn in deeper in the center than at the edges. At first, she became excited, knowing that there would be deer in this country as well as bears, but on closer examination, as she walked a bit further into the woods, she realized that it wasn't an animal run after all. It was a path that had been worn by people. Only it was becoming overgrown. She noticed a piece of white painted wood laying in some bushes and bent down to pick it up.

"Hey you guys!" she called, "Take a look at this!"

Working together, Ted and Jeff had managed to heave the tree limb into the bushes. They jogged down the overgrown trail after her. Sandra stood looking down at the remains of an old sign. It was splintered at the edges and the white paint was cracked and peeling. The faded black letters on it read "CAMP CRYSTAL LAKE."

Ted exhaled softly.

"Camp Blood…" he said in a low voice.

Jeff and Sandra both looked at him questioningly.

"This place is on the same lake that we're gonna be," Ted said, looking around uneasily.

"Camp Blood?" said Jeff.

Sandra stared at the sign, frowning. There was something familiar about that name but she couldn't place it. It seemed to her that she had heard something about a place known as Camp Blood. She thought she could remember a newspaper article about some murders that had taken place at a summer camp.

"Wasn't this the camp—" she started but Ted cut her off.

"Come on…" he said, taking the sign from her and tossing it into the bushes, "We'll be late."

"Can't we take a look?" said Sandra, gazing back down the path, waiting to see what the old place looked like.

"No way," said Ted, starting back down the path toward the truck, anxious to get away.

Jeff and Sandra exchanged glances and started after him.

"What's the problem?" Jeff said.

"You don't wanna hear about it, man," said Ted, "Believe me, not before lunch."

He seemed in a hurry to get back to the truck. Sandra looked at Jeff and shrugged. Ted's mood seemed to have changed very suddenly. It was clear that he didn't want to stay there and it was just as clear that he didn't want to talk about it.

They got back into the truck and started off down the road again. Ted seemed unusually quiet as they drove away. Behind them, a twig cracked on the trail as a heavy work boot stepped on it. The Watcher moved some branches aside in order to look after the departing truck. He breathed heavily as old memories surged up within him. They were twisted memories that wither like snakes in his unhinged mind.

Chapter 2

Paul Holt stepped out of his office in the large, Victorian frame house on the lakeshore and pulled the rope on the brass bell mounted on the porch railing. He brushed his thick, blond hair away from his eyes and leaned back against the railing as the counselor trainees gathered in front of him.

At 25, he was senior to the oldest of them by a mere six years and he was painfully aware of his responsibility to take charge immediately and make sure they all did their jobs. If this counselor training session went well and the camp officials he had contracted with were pleased with the results, there was good chance he'd get referrals to other summer camps and be able to double his enrollment next year. It was an excellent way of adding a couple of weeks of extra work to the summer season and building up a part time vacation business for himself.

He got to spend and enjoyable few weeks in the woods running his own business and picking up some extra money for grad school.

He looked around, trying to remember all their names as they started to come out from the other cabins where they had been unpacking and settling in.

There was Mark, a dark, muscular boy of about eighteen, confined to a wheelchair as a result of a tragic motorcycle accident. Yet, despite his handicap, he was remarkably self-sufficient. He'd been an excellent role model for the kids at camp, proving that you could accomplish whatever you set your mind to.

Vicky, a pretty, leggy brunette of about seventeen, came up behind mark as he struggled to get his wheelchair through the soft dirt and up a slight incline to the main house. She offered to help him with a push, but Mark resolutely shook his head, making the well-meaning girl look hurt, as if he had rejected her.

Paul sighed. Perhaps Mark was a bit too self-sufficient. There were a few things he was going to have to learn but they were the sort of things that no one would be able to teach him. He'd have to come to them by himself. Often, people who were handicapped became overly sensitive to other people trying to help them. In a sense, it was understandable because no one wanted to be pitied or condescended to. And all too often, otherwise well-meaning people could become very intrusive, such as grabbing a handicapped person's wheelchair and pushing it without bothering to ask if their help was wanted. But there was difference between an intrusive person and someone offering to help out of a genuine desire to be supportive, even if you didn't want the help and felt it was important for you to make it on your own. There was no reason you couldn't smile and thank the person for

the offer, refusing graciously. A simple shake of the head, such as Mark had given Vicky was not meant as a rejection because Mark was not inconsiderate and he probably felt self-conscious about the difficulty he was having—But Vicky had taken it as such. It was plain by the hurt expression on her face.

Maybe we put too much emphasis on being self-sufficient and independent, Paul thought, watching them, instead of stressing competitiveness, perhaps we ought to stress accomplishment instead, not for the sake of winning, but just for the joy of it—With the focus on achieving things together. Maybe then we wouldn't have such a hard time communicating and people might not get hurt so easily.

Terry, a shapely girl of eighteen, was coming down the hiking trail with her dog, Muffin, tagging along behind her.

Paul had some doubts about her decision to bring that dog along. It wasn't exactly an outdoor dog, like Shepherd or a Setter. It was one of those cute little lap dogs about the size of a football and it was all hair and ribbons. Paul didn't understand would wrap a dog up like a Christmas present. The dog would pick up a million brambles in country like this, not to mention fleas and ticks and Lord only knew what sort of parasites from the lakes and streams. And in the woods, a domestic dog wouldn't stand a chance against the sort of wildlife it could encounter.

Paul had even seen German Shepherds get done in by raccoons who were a lot more ferocious than the looked and canny enough to lure the dogs into a river or a pond and then drown them by climbing on their heads and clinging there. Even on bare ground, a coon could give a hunting dog one hell of a bad time.

A little hairball like Muffin wouldn't last three seconds. However, there wasn't much he could do about it now. She had brought the dog with her and it seemed pointless to make an issue out of it.

Terry would find out for herself that there was a lot of difference between the wilderness and a city park.

As she came down the hill, Scott stepped out from behind a stand of bushes and took aim at her denim cutoffs with a wooden slingshot. He let the elastic fly and the pebble struck Terry in the ass.

Crying out, she brought her hand back instinctively and spun around as Scott stepped out from behind the bushes. He tapped the slingshot lightly against his chin, giving her a smoldering look and a wink. Terry grimaced wryly and turned around, continuing back down toward the main house.

Seeing them, Paul thought that some guys never outgrew that "dipping the pigtails in ink" stage.

Ted came up, not watching where he was going and banged into the porch steps because he was so engrossed in his pocket

computer game. He rubbed his shin and looked up at Paul, sheepishly, then sat down on the steps.

It was a heck of a crew, thought Paul. It looked like he had his work cut out for him. And, to top things off, Ginny hadn't even shown up yet. Things were getting off to a somewhat shaky start.

"Okay, let's settle down", he said, consulting with his clipboard and looking around at them. With the exception of Ginny, everyone seemed to be present.

"It's great to have ya'll here at our new counselor training center," he said, "You've all worked as counselors at one camp or another. Terry, Vicky: you two were upstate last summer right? Scott, Hi! Good to see you here, buddy. You'll need it."

The others laughed as Scott shook his head wearily.

"And Mark," Paul continued, "I know we've worked a season or two together right?"

Mark smiled at the recognition.

"The rest of you I'll get to know soon enough," Paul went on, noting several new faces.

"I'm also sure there's one thing I don't have to tell any of you: Being a counselor isn't the gravy summer job everyone thinks it is and what we're going to do over the next two weeks, if the rest of my staff ever shows up, is go back to the basics. Survival, first aid, boating, archery, rifle range—all of it.

He was about to go on when what sounded like the crack of a rifle shot startled everyone and they all turned around to see a dilapidated red Volkswagen convertible come banging down the dirt road leading into the camp, backfiring like a glutton at a chili chook-off and kicking up a cloud of dust.

"What the hell?" said Paul.

The VW Bug swerved into the camp and skidded to a stop beneath some trees. The driver was an attractive young woman in a white sleeveless blouse and pink skirt. Her blond hair was pinned up.

She looked relieved as she leaned back against the seat with a sigh, shutting off the noisy mutter.

Ginny, Paul thought, Of course. What else was he supposed to expect? It was hard enough trying to run a training session with a bunch of kids who probably just wanted to smoke dope and run off into the woods together without having your first assistant showing up late in a ratty old VW with the gas pains. Where had she picked up that wreck and why?

"I'll be right back," he said to Ted.

He went over to the car.

"Hi!" said Ginny cheerfully, "I'm late."

Paul gave her a hard stare.

"Come with me," he said.

She shrugged and followed him up to one of the other cabins. They went up the steps of the porch and he beckoned her inside then closed the door behind them. Once out of sight of the others, he turned on her angrily.

"What's this crap, Ginny? You're supposed to be my assistant. Everyone else got here hours ago."

"I said I'm sorry," she interrupted.

"You did?"

She grimaced wryly, releasing she hadn't said any such thing.

"I'm sorry, okay? My car is sick."

"You could have called."

"Paul, I did try. Your phones aren't working yet."

Paul took a deep breath and let it out slowly. She did have a point there. The telephones should have been taken care of by now but of course they were still off. He should have pursued that but with so much going on, he had spaced it.

"Alright," he said, easing up, "Get your gear stowed and help me outside, okay?"

"Paul, look," Ginny said, "The course starts today. Here I am and I promise you I'll never be late again in my entire life."

Paul raised his eyebrows skeptically.

"Well," she said, "Do we have a deal?"

He chuckled.

"Alright, alright… what the hell."

He put his arms around her and pulled her close.

"I was starting to worry about you."

She smiled and kissed him on the nose.

"Bullshit, Paul."

They went back outside and Paul was a bit disconcerted to see the grins on all their faces. He tried to look more serious as he pretended to consult his clipboard, hoping that his embarrassment wouldn't show.

"Put your car on the lot, okay?" he said to Ginny without looking up. "This place is starting to look like Burger King." He looked back up at the counselors.

"Alright, where was I?"

"You were about to give us your 'Let's keep our shit together' speech," said Ted, grinning.

Paul gave him a look and he quickly added, "Mr. Holt."

"Right," said Paul, "Okay." He looked around at the group. They were all doing their best to look very serious. He shook his head.

"A few words about safety, okay?"

Ginny got behind the wheel of the old VW Bug and turned the

key in the ignition. The starter made a terrible grinding noise.

"Now, I want running kept down to a minimum, said Paul, continuing his speech. "Respect the equipment we'll be handling."

Ginny kept trying the ignition but the starter just kept grinding, draining the battery. The counselors were paying more attention to her efforts than they were to Paul.

"…Axes… knives… saws…" Paul continued, undaunted, "They can all be trouble. Their misuse is the main cause of camp accidents."

Ginny kept trying to start the car, relentlessly, and for a moment it seemed that her stubbornness was going to pay off. The motor caught for a second then backfired violently, coughed and died.

"Take care of your equipment," Paul went on, ignoring her, "And it'll take care of you."

Ginny slumped back in the car seat with a sigh, looking defeated. She glanced back toward the counselors and saw that most of them were watching her rather than listening to Paul. She grinned and shrugged.

"Now, a word of caution about our friends in the Forrest," Paul said.

Scott and Mark exchanged glances. Scott mouthed 'friends in the forest'? and rolled his eyes. Mark stifled a laugh.

"Among other things," Paul went on, "oblivious to their actions, "this is bear country and, contrary to what everybody hears, bears are dangerous. I don't want to see any sloppy use of food around the camp. A black bear can smell a cookie a mile away?'

Jeff and Sandra giggled.

"That means no food fights," Paul said seriously, "And those nights we camp out, no eating in your tents. Change often. If you're a woman, don't use perfume and…keep clean during your menstrual cycle."

Vicky and Terry exchanged glances, hardly able to believe he had actually said that.

Meanwhile, Ginny had gone back to trying to start her car again with no more success than the last time. Paul finally relented and went over to see what he could do to help.

"Having trouble?" He said. She looked up at him and nodded, sighing heavily.

"You've got to treat 'em gentle," he said with mock seriousness. "Just like kids, use a little of that child psychology you're majoring in."

Ginny made a face at him as he walked around behind the car and opened the motor compartment.

He loosened the wing nut, holding the air cleaner cover on. He took out the air filter and it was filthy and clogged beyond belief. He shook out as much dirt as possible and then checked her distributer

cap. He tightened it. With the air filter still off, he placed his hand over the carburetor intake.

"Try it," he said.

Ginny turned the key and the motor kicked over, coughing once and sending a spray of soot all over Paul. Coughing, he squinted and waved his hand in front of his face and replaced the air filter and the cover. Ginny backed up until she was even with him and, with a grin, said "It's more fun using on child psychology on YOU." She winked. "You're such a sucker for it."

Paul watched her with irritation as she swung the car around and rattled off toward the parking lot.

He shook his head. She always did it to him. Every single time. No matter what it was, she simply grinned and shrugged it off as if life were nothing but a joke.

He glanced off toward the counselors who weren't even trying to hide their smiles anymore.

Well, at least they thought it was funny. He, however, wasn't laughing. She was always accusing him of being too serious. Well perhaps he was at time but here, at camp, there was a reason for everything, including his seriousness. For the most part, these kids were from the city and the suburbs. They weren't like country kids who grew up around the woods and had a healthy respect for the wilderness. Just as you didn't walk alone down on Canal Street in New York City at 1 o'clock in the morning. There were certain precautions you took in the woods. How could these trainees ever hope to teach small children such things if they didn't take them seriously themselves?

He looked back at them inside. Well, it was early yet. They were only getting started. There was still plenty of time for them to get it all together, assuming they applied themselves. Otherwise, they were liable to learn that the woods could be just as dangerous a place as any unlit alley at night.

Chapter 3

The trainees spent the rest of the day getting better acquainted with one another while they set everything up for the next two weeks. In spite of her seemingly carefree attitude, Ginny impressed Paul by quickly taking charge of getting the kitchen facilities in order, allowing him to make sure that all the equipment was properly stowed away, and enough firewood chopped to last them several days. They all pitched in and worked quickly and efficiently so that by the time dinner rolled around, they were well ahead of schedule and had worked up an appetite.

After diner, they broke out the marshmallows and built a large campfire. As they relaxed near the flames and enjoyed the cool evening breeze off the lake, inevitable someone brought up the legend of Camp Blood.

Sandra remembered where she had heard that name before and she told everyone about how Crazy Ralph had accosted them with his grim warning as they drove into town. Vicky mentioned having heard some rumors in town that the boy who had drowned, Jason Voorhees, had never actually drowned at all but that he had survived and was living like some sort of crazy hermit in the woods.

Paul allowed them to speculate a while on all the stories they had heard and then, picking his moment carefully, he said: "I don't wanna scare anyone… but I'm gonna give it to you straight about Jason."

Immediately, all eyes were on him. He stared into the fire for a long moment, prolonging the suspense, making sure he had their undivided attention. Then, he continued.

"His body was never recovered from the lake after he drowned…" he said quietly, making eye contact with each of them in turn.

"…And if you listen to the old timers in town, they'll tell you he's still out there… Some sort of demented creature."

He lowered his voice slightly and got a faraway look in his eyes.

"Surviving in the wilderness… full grown by now… stalking…"

He stretched the pauses out for maximum effect, noticing how they snuggled closer together. How they moved nearer to the fire. How their eyes occasionally glanced off uneasily into the darkness.

"…stealing what he needs… living off wild animals and vegetation…"

He looked around at them and said softly, "Some folks claim they've even seen him. Right in this area."

Sandra huddled closer to Jeff and glanced at him uneasily. He tried to look as if he wasn't buying any of it but he didn't quite succeed.

His smile seemed a little strained. It was only a ghost story he told himself but there was something really spooky about a ghost story that had really happened.

Especially when you were hearing it so close to the place where it had happened. He thought back to the sign Sandra had found laying in the bushes. The warped and peeling sign bearing the legend: Camp Crystal Lake. And he thought about the way Ted's voice had sounded when he had seen it and said: "Camp Blood." And about how Ted had wanted to get away from there as quick as possible.

Paul continued with his story.

"The girl who survived that night at Camp Blood…"

He paused.

"That… Friday the 13th… She claims she saw him."

Vicky swallowed nervously as she became completely caught up in the story. Terry hunched her shoulders and moved a little closer to Scott. Even Ginny was starting to feel caught up in the tale.

There was something about the story. The place. Paul's tone. And the crackling of the flames mixed with the night sounds that reached down deep and touched some primitive chord within them all.

Fear of the night—of the unknown—of unseen predators.

"She disappeared two months later," Paul said, his voice very quiet now. His eyes, staring into the fire, vanished. Blood was everywhere. No one knows what happened to her.

Ginny licked her lips nervously as she realized that that part of it was definitely true. Paul wasn't just making it up. She remembered reading about it in the papers. The girl's name had been Alice and she had returned to the town of Crystal Lake to exercise her demons. The papers had made much of that fact and Ginny, being a psych major, had become interested in the story.

The girl had survived a series of grisly murders committed by Pamela Voorhees, a local woman who had been driven insane with grief over the drowning of her son, Jason. Apparently, the Voorhees woman held the counselors responsible for her boy's death. And in a classic case of transference, she confused the counselors working at the camp the following summer with those who had worked there when her son had drowned. In her twisted mind, they were all the same and they were all to blame, so they had to die.

Apparently, she caught two of the young camp counselors alone, making love in the barn and she slaughtered them. The bodies were hacked to pieces, almost beyond recognition. The authorities moved quickly and closed the camp down, but the case was never solved. Back then, no one ever connected the Voorhees woman with the murders, but strange events continued at the camp for several years after that.

The people who owned it tried to open it up the following year but first, the water was poisoned and then there were some fires. They gave up finally and the camp was closed down permanently and abandoned to fall into disrepair. And then, some years later, a young man named Steve Christie tried to open up the camp again, undaunted by the rumors of a curse. He refurbished it and repaired all the damage but lots of new equipment and hired new counselors to arrive a couple of weeks early and help get the place operational.

It was a fatal error.

In her insane fury, the Voorhees woman had murdered all the counselors at the camp, including the camp's owner, Steve Christie. And in a desperate life or death struggle with the madwoman, Alice struck at her with a machete and decapitated her. According to the papers, she had then experienced a lapse of consciousness—a blackout of some sort. No doubt induced by shock. And she came to in the hospital, claiming at that the boy, Jason, had come up out of the lake and tried to pull her in.

Of course, the papers capitalized on that remark and blew it out of proportion. Ginny remembered reading about it and thinking god, that poor girl… no wonder she was having hallucinations after a traumatic experience like that. It must have been PTSD: post traumatic stress disorder. The same thing Vietnam veterans experienced after returning home from the war.

Alice had kept reliving the events that had caused the trauma and she had finally decided to return to the place where it all happened, evidently hoping to convince herself it was over, and she had nothing left to fear. It turned out she had been wrong. Dead wrong.

"Legend has it Jason saw his mother beheaded that night," Paul continued in an ominous tone, "That he took his revenge…"

Mark looked over his shoulder nervously. Paul was whispering now and sounds of the cracking flames and the crickets and the night birds seemed very loud. The wind blowing through the trees sounded like the rustle of someone approaching—someone or something.

"A revenge that he'll continue to seek if anyone ever enters his wilderness again," said Paul, looking at each of them, "And by now, I guess you all know that we're the first to return here."

They all held their breath, watching him, frozen with fascination.

"Five years…" Paul said, looking around at all of them, maintaining eye contact, drawing them deeper into the spirit of the story, "Five years, he's been dormant. And he's hungry."

His voice was barely a whisper now and they were all leaning forward, hanging on to his every word.

"Jason is out there…" Paul said, as if he himself was frightened of what he was telling them.

"Watching… always on the prowl for intruders… waiting to kill… waiting to devour…"

Nobody moved. Nobody even breathed.

"Thirsty for young blood…" Paul said.

And suddenly, a half naked figure leapt into the circle, out of the darkness, beyond the fire, screaming hideously and brandishing a spear. The face was grotesque, a travesty of human features.

Deformed and twisted. Everyone screamed and scrambled away from the frightening apparition.

All except Paul, who stood there, grinning.

"Come back, come back!" he called, laughing. He approached the creature and ripped away the grotesque mask, revealing Ted. No one had noticed him slip away, as Paul had occupied their attention with the story and now they all saw how they'd been had. They drifted back with groans and muttered curses, feeling foolish yet at the same time, greatly relieved.

Ted stood there, chuckling, reenacting his role by brandishing the spear and making hideous faces.

"Okay," said Paul, "Now that we've got that out of our system, I don't wanna hear anymore about it.

It's ancient history. Jason drowned. Mrs. Voorhees was killed, and Camp Crystal Lake is off limits. Got it?"

Everyone muttered assent and a few of them started laughing in appreciation of the joke.

They gathered around Ted, punching him playfully as he faked lunges at them with his spear. Paul spotted Ginny coming back. She was still looking around her a little nervously, so Paul grinned and gave her a hug.

"Gotcha, huh?" he said, winking at her.

"What did you think?"

"Second act needs work," said Ginny, wryly.

After putting out the fire, they all went back to the main house where they put on some music. Ted propped the spear against the wall by the stairs and hung the ghoulish rubber mask from it then settled down in a chair with one of his electronic games.

Paul agreed to a game of chess with Ginny. Mark and Ted sat at the table, arm wrestling. Sandra and Jeff snuggled together in a corner while Terry sat on the sofa and wrote a letter home. Scott put on his most engaging smile as he came up to her.

"Hi, Terry," he said, "Want to dance?"

She looked up at him and smiled.

"No thanks."

Without missing a beat, Scott turned his attention to her pet dog, Muffin.

"Hi, there. How about you?" he said, bending down and raising his eyebrows, "Would YOU like to dance?"

He scooped the little dog up in his arms and snuggled it against his chest. Muffin licked Scott's face, pleased at the attention. He started to dance a slow waltz with Muffin in his arms.

"So there I was," Scott said to the dog, as if Terry wasn't even there, "Sitting in this fast food joint, thinking to myself, Scott my boy, what are you gonna do with your life?"

Terry couldn't keep from smiling. Her first reaction to him was that he was a real fox but a bit too sure of himself. And shooting that slingshot at her hadn't exactly raised him in her estimation. That pebble might have been small, but it had stung. She had decided that Scott was really full of himself.

A real pain in the ass. But she had also realized that there was a lot of little boy in him—a little boy who, despite his dark good looks, wasn't very sure of himself at all. And that was sort of cute in an endearing way. He was obviously trying a bit too hard and even though she was attracted to him, she really didn't want to respond to that sort of approach. It would only encourage him to continue acting that way.

She didn't need yet another guy coming on all macho to her. She was sick and tired of that act. Just because a girl had a good body, she thought, guys seemed to think that they rally had to strut their stuff or else she wouldn't be interested. They probably figured she got hit on all the time so they had to come on extra cool just so she'd notice. As if that were the only approach she would respond to.

The trouble was they were only half right. She did get hit on all the time, mainly because she was "pretty," "had a nice ass," "good tits," and "great legs." But that was just the trouble. She knew perfectly well why she was getting hit on and it didn't' really have anything to do with her personality. It had to do with guys wanting to play with her body. They didn't want to know who she was. They were more concerned with WHAT they could get from her, which was why every time some guy came on to her with that slick, "hey babe", sort of manner, all her defense mechanisms were alerted.

She had a feeling that Scott wasn't really like that, but he seemed to think it necessary to act the part. If only he would loosen up a little and just act like himself instead of trying to be slick and cool.

Maybe she'd be interested. He was cute and he was kind of funny, but the macho act got in the way.

She didn't want him to think that this was the Scott that she liked. Maybe he'd get the hint.

Scott danced by a window with Muffin and the dog suddenly perked up its ears and growled. Scott drew back from it a little.

"Hey," he said, "I'm striking out all over the place tonight."

He glanced out of the corner of his eye to see if Terry had heard that remark and he didn't notice that the dog was looking intently out the window into the darkness. There seemed to be a figure standing out there, watching them through the window.

"Check," Paul said, moving his knight.

"Wrong, white man," Ginny said, moving her bishop to take the Knight. "Check mate."

Paul stared at the board in disbelief. He had been so intent on placing Ginny's king in check that he hadn't even seen his vulnerability to her bishop.

"Well… what next?" said Ginny, looking around. She glanced over at the arm wrestlers.

"Either get my arm broken by Mark," she glanced at Ted, "Or my brain ping-ponged by our electronic wizard over there."

She yawned.

"Or bed," she added, casually.

Paul kept staring at the chessboard.

"Goodnight, Paul," Ginny said, "See you in the morning."

She grabbed her sweater and went outside, down the steps of the porch and up the short path leading to her cabin. On the path, she hesitated, frowning. She thought she had heard something rustling in the bushes. Perhaps it was a deer. She recalled Paul's warning about bears and shivered slightly. Between Paul and his wildlife safety lectures and Ted, and his performance at the campfire, she was getting the willies being out in the dark all alone.

Suddenly, she got the feeling that she was being watched.

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Back at the house, Sandra snuggled close to Jeff.

"I've got to see that place!" she said.

"What place?" said Jeff.

"That camp. Camp Blood."

"What?" said Jeff, looking at her to see if she was serious. Apparently, she was.

"You crazy?"

"I've just got to, Jeff!" she said, biting her lower lip, "Maybe there is something to the legend."

Jeff shook his head.

"Come on," she said, "I'm serious!"

"No way," Jeff insisted, "You're not getting me out there. You heard what Paul said. It's off limits."

Sandra gave her a sly smile and moved closer to him, allowing her breasts to rub against his chest as he took a ringlet of his hair and gently twisted it around her finger.

"We'll see," she said, smiling knowingly.

Ginny hurried inside her cabin, feeling a bit unnerved by her short walk down the short path from the main house. She looked around at the empty room, went over to the windows and pulled the curtains shut. She grimaced at herself in the mirror mounted above the pine dresser.

This is really silly, she thought, I'm letting all my buttons get pushed by some big jock telling a silly ghost story.

She pursed her lips as she glanced at herself in the mirror.

He was, however, a very sexy jock, she thought. She sighed. Her friends would never understand her taking up with a guy like Paul. They would much rather spend their vacations doing summer stock at a theater or participating in pretentious sensitivity training workshops and encounter sessions where they could get in touch with themselves. Instead of spending their evenings around a campfire, kicking back, and signing songs. They'd sit around in some bar or café and have endless discussions about young Freud and Dr. Ruth. They'd rather talk about things like "sexual repression" and "passive aggressive tendencies" than tell ghost stories. And they'd blanch at the thought of working with a bunch of young, summer camp counselors when they could spend their time dissecting one other's personalities as well as their own. It was really pretty funny in a way. Most of her friends at school would spend fortunes on clothes from LL BEAN, REI, Banana Republic, and Eddie Bauer, decking themselves out in down parkas, Woolrich flannel shirts, Bush jackets, and cotton canvas pants, fatigue sweaters and hunting shoes, and Cordura day packs. So, they'd look like they were about to go off on a safari in darkest Africa but the very thought of taking an overnight hike into the mountains would make their blood run cold. They would be utterly lost without TV and indoor plumbing and they'd rather take their sports cars and drive two blocks to go to class then walk or ride a bicycle.

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Paul was too straight, too macho, and too unfashionable for them. But while he might not be an intellectual, thought Ginny, he had something a lot of them seemed to lack: common sense. He didn't need to use a lot of sophisticated jargon to get his point across and he didn't need to attend some group encounter session in order to get in-touch with himself. He already knew who he was.

He'd much rather take a hike into the woods and get in touch with nature and there was a lot to be said about that.

She teased him a lot but one thing she really liked about him was that she could just relax around him. She didn't need to impress him. She didn't need to compete. A lot of people she knew looked

down on jocks because they were into sports and sports were supposed to be nothing but adolescent power fantasies—a means to act out aggressive impulses and repressed behavior. Yet, the point was that with so many of her friends, their relationships took on an even more competitive aspect than the most hard-hitting football game. It sometimes seemed that the more intellectual people seemed to be, the more childish they acted.

Paul wasn't like that. He enjoyed athletic activities, but he enjoyed them for their own sake. He wasn't driven to win—just to do his best. That way, he was able to enjoy what he was doing, whether he won or lost. Because for him, it wasn't about winning or losing. And in that sense, psychologically speaking, he was one of the healthiest people she knew. He was the same way in their relationship.

She had just beaten him at chess, but it hadn't wounded his masculine pride. He had sat there, staring at the board, wondering at how he'd been tricked into making the move she wanted him to make, purposefully, looking vulnerable so that she could entice him into dropping his guard.

However, it wasn't going to ruin his whole evening that he had been beaten by her. Other guys she'd dated would have dwelled on it for days. She had been really looking forword to this time with him out in the woods. They had started off a little shakily but that was only because she had been late and Paul had been anxious to have everything run smoothly. She could understand that and maybe he really had been worried about her. That was rather sweet, in any case. It was a good group of kids and it looked as if the next two weeks would be just great.

She undressed down to her bra and panties and went over to the wash basin. A shadow crossed the window. She glanced up, frowning as if sensing something. Then, dismissing her first insitinctive reaction, she shook her head and put on her bathrobe. She belted it around her and sat down on the bed to brush her hair. There was a soft knock at the door. She looked up, startled, then grinned self consciously at her jumpiness and went to answer it. She opened it and looked out. There was nobody there. She frowned and took a step outside.

"Who's there?"

She crossed the porch and looked around the side of the cabin but there was no sign of anyone. She was certain someone had knocked on her door.

"Hello?" She said, uncertainly.

There was no response.

"Who is it?" She called, feeling a bit apprehensive. Everything seemed quiet. She shrugged, thinking it must have been her

imagination, which was stirred up after that story by the campfire. Perhaps it was only the wind making a branch knock against the side of the cabin. She turned around and went back inside.

As she pulled the door shut and started to turn, a hand was clamped over her mouth. Her eyes went wide with terror and her body went completely rigid. She felt herself being spun around and it was Paul. He had crept into her cabin while she was on the porch, checking around the side.

"Paul!" she said, raising her hand as if to strike him, "God damn it!"

He grinned.

"Hey, calm down," he said, softly. "You'll wake the natives."

He glanced around furtively.

"I'm not supposed to be fraternizing with the staff."

She smiled.

"I won't tell."

He gently pulled her close and kissed her. She put her arms around his neck as he undid her belt and slipped his hands inside her robe.

"I missed you, Ginny," he whispered, "And I was really worried when you didn't show on time."

She felt his hands upon her breasts. His lips against her throat.

"Paul," she said, pulling away for a moment, "There's something I think I should tell you…"

He interrupted her with another kiss, pushing the bathrobe off her shoulders. She reached for his belt.

Outside the cabin, Crazy Ralph stood by a tree near Ginny's window, looking in at her and Paul through the partially open curtain. He had come out to the camp to warn them once again—to tell them that they were doomed if they didn't leave at once. He still remembered what had happened as clearly as if it had occurred only yesterday instead of five years ago. It was one of the few clear memories he had because it had been burned into his consciousness by guilt. He could have saved them just as he always tried to save the people in town when he rode around preaching the gospel, but no one ever listened to him.

Somehow, he needed to convince them. He needed to make them see the danger they were in. Yet, the moment he had seen Ginny entering the cabin all alone and failing to close the curtains properly, he had become confused. And then, after Paul knocked on her door and hid while she came out on the porch, and Ralph saw her from behind the tree in that short bathrobe opened halfway down her chest, he became still more confused. And now, as he watched them through the narrow gap in the curtains and saw them clutching at each other,

saw Paul covering her mouth with kisses, their tongues tasting each other, their hands running up and down each other's bodies, Ralph was more confused than ever.

He was so distracted by the site that he did not react immediately when he heard a twig snap close behind him. Then, it was too late as two large powerful hands snapped out and looped a crude garrote made of barbed wire around his neck and pinned him back against the tree as the wire tightened savagely and sliced into his throat, cutting through his trachea and larynx before he could cry out. Blood trickled down his neck and white fire flared before his eyes as all vision and all feeling went away forever.

Chapter 4

Ginny awoke to the sound of birds chirping outside her cabin window. She smiled and reached out for Paul sleepily, touching the rumpled sheets beside her. She opened her eyes and saw that she was alone in bed. She sat up and pulled the curtains open. Warm sunlight streamed into the room.

As she turned, she saw a note from Paul written in lipstick on the mirror. It read "BEWARE OF BEARS."

Grinning sheepishly, she got out of bed. Well, she had tried to tell him but he hadn't given her much of a chance since when he had finally stopped to take a breath. She was much too turned on to care.

He had always affected her that way. It wasn't that he was such a terrific lover, although, there was certainly nothing wrong with the way that Paul made love. While they were doing it, he always concentrated on her—on the emotions they were sharing. He focused on the feelings that were washing over them instead of concentrating on his technique as so many guys did because they were anxious to perform well.

She never understood why guys often got so hung upon the mechanics of lovemaking rather than the pleasure of it. Why reduce something wonderful to nothing more than mere physical exercise? Why remove yourself from the experience of genuine intimacy? How the hell could you possibly be involved with what you were doing while computing baseball batting averages or doing multiplication tables in your head?

She had once gone out with a music major that seemed so preoccupied during their lovemaking and so rhythmic in his movements that when she pressed him to talk about it, he had confessed that he was concentrating on the scores of various complex classical arrangements by composers like Paganini and Scarlatti. At first, she couldn't believe it and she thought that he was joking but he was absolutely serious. He confessed to her that he had worked out a system whereby various composers were classified according to different stages of the lovemaking process. Debussy was helpful during foreplay. Wagner, he claimed, was very effective right near the end.

She got even with him one night by waiting until just the right moment then reaching beneath her pillow for her stereo remote control. She blasted him with a tape of Twisted Sister. He left scratch marks on the ceiling. Mercifully, Paul wasn't anything like that. Whenever the two of them made love, he was there with her completely 100% and it was like that when they did things together too.

The slightest bit intimidated by the fact that she had as much

endurance on the trail as he did, could run faster, or had a higher IQ. Instead, rather than resent her for the things she could do, he enjoyed the way she challenged him and spurred him on to try new things.

Whatever they were doing, whether it was tennis, riding a bike, or running a marathon, they engaged in play rather than competition. They complemented each other very well. She wondered if she were really getting serious about him. She hadn't thought that she'd be ready for that yet, but lately she'd been thinking that maybe the key to success in love wasn't necessarily finding the right guy but recognizing him when he came along. Otherwise, she thought, you might be so busy looking that you could miss someone really special who was right under your nose.

She got dressed and went down to the main house for breakfast. It was Terry's turn to cook this morning, according to the chart they made up and she wasn't certainly skimping on her responsibilities. She had gotten up early and had the biscuits in the oven by the time everybody got there. Ginny arrived to the wonderful smell of fresh-baked biscuits, mingled with frying sausages and something Terry called "Scrambled Denver Omlet" which consisted of scrambled eggs with little pieces of ham, cheese, peppers, and onions mixed in.

In return for the excellent breakfast, they all voted to excuse her from KP for the remainder of the day. After breakfast, they gathered in the living room over coffee and Ginny gave a talk on child psychology with tips on how to deal with homesick campers. They followed this with a general discussion with how to handle problem children whose parents packed the off to camp just to have them away from home all summer. Then, they exchanged horror stories about problem kids they had run into during summers past and how they had dealt with them.

Jeff told a story about two rotten tempered little boys—brothers who had driven him nearly insane one summer. Always yelling and screaming and fighting with each other. One time, he said, they'd gone at it in the camp's recreating building and they had a war with billiard balls. It was a miracle no one was killed, he said. He, himself, had a narrow escape when one of the little bastards hurled a pool ball right between his legs.

"What did you do?" asked Scott.

"I decided to immobilize him," Jeff said, "I stuck them in two wooden chairs, placed back-to-back.

Then I lashed them down, tied them to each other. I figured they could just sit there and scream to their little hearts content until their throats were raw. I left them that way for three hours. They quieted down sometime after that."

"I always carry handcuffs, myself," said Ted.

"Handcuffs?" Ginny said, feeling that she was starting to lose control of this discussion. This wasn't exactly the sort of child psychology she had in mind.

"You actually used handcuffs?"

"You can buy them in any police supply store or magic shop," said Ted, with a perfectly straight face,

"Or one of those kinky places where they sell leather, you know? Those places are good because they've also got these black leather hoods that lace up from the back, you know? So you can't really see anything. It's just these little holes for the nose where they can breathe. Even the mouth is covered—keeps them from making too much noise."

Ginny stared at him in horror.

"You know what else is good?" continued Ted, "They got these belts that go along it as sort of an accessory with these studs and rings on them, only the studs are just for decoration, really. Although, I guess they'd hurt if you got hit with them, but the rings are the thing, see because he can take a length of chain and run it through the rings, then loop it over the handcuffs and lock the whole rig down. And the little buggers can't hardly move, then—"

"Ted!" said Ginny, unable to believe her ears, "My God, you can't do that to little kids! What would their parents say?"

Then she saw the grins on their faces and heard the snickers and she blushed as she realized that they'd been kidding. "Same old Ted," Paul said with a chuckle. Ginny threw a sofa pillow at him.

Following Ginny's session, Paul took over and mustered everyone outside for a cross-country run, during which it quickly became obvious who the smokers were. Mark, who was excused from the run because he couldn't propel his wheelchair across rough country, sat at the side of the path near the start and finish line, yelling encouragement. He laughed as he saw Jeff bringing up the rear, gasping and panting hard.

"Hey, what's the matter, Jeff?" he yelled, clapping his hands, "Come on, the women are showing you up!"

Sandra was leading the race. Jeff stumbled by out of breath, giving Mark the finger.

After the run, just when they all thought they were going to get a chance to rest, Paul announced that they were going to walk it off on a nature hike. And with a collective groan, the counselors embarked upon a hike down one of the lakeside trails.

"Try to stay on this trail," Paul warned as they passed in single file down the narrow path that ran along the lakeshore. There's a lot of poison ivy here, he pointed out the three-pronged plants. After lunch, we're gonna do some more running.

There were more miserable groans.

Ginny brought up the rear to make sure there were no stragglers. Paul had told her that he wouldn't put it past some of these kids to hang back until everyone else was far ahead and then double back to the cabins where they could goldbrick. So Ginny was making sure that everyone kept up while Paul set a good, steady pace up front. She saw Terry's little dog, Muffin, go tearing off into the trees, barking furiously at something it had seen there. And for a moment, Ginny hung back, looking in the direction that the dog had gone. She had never seen the dog respond like that before. Something felt strange. She squinted, trying to see through the thick woods but she couldn't see anything.

Muffin had disappeared somewhere into the bushes at the side of the rail.

She shrugged and continued on. It was probably only a squirrel.

Still, for some peculiar reason, she could not shake the feeling that there was someone watching them. She hadn't said anything about it to Paul because he'd probably just laugh and claim that his fireside ghost story had gotten to her after all. There was no way she could explain it to him. She simply sensed something nearby—something vaguely disturbing. She suppressed an involuntary shudder and hurried to catch up with the others.

He stood, hidden in the trees and watched them pass by, oblivious to his presence. Deep within his simple, twisted mind, a cold fire began to burn as he watched them disappear from sight. He knew who these people were—they were just like the others—the ones who had hurt him so long ago. The same ones who had hurt his mother.

Jason Voorhees was insane. The violent things he'd seen and the savage life he'd lived out in the woods had their irreversible effects upon his feeble mind. But those things had only completed what nature had started. He had never been completely normal. Strange forces had been at work in his life from the very moment of his conception.

From his premature birth at the stroke of midnight one Friday the 13th, there had been something different about him. It was not only that he had been an unusually large infant with striking pronounced features that gave him an almost adult expression, but there was something ominous about him that filled all those who came near him with a profound sense of unease. All… except his mother. A mother loves her child. Pamela Voorhees never had a chance to make it to the hospital.

Her labor had been unnaturally short as if the child within her were trying to claw its way out of her womb. The doctor had arrived just in time to deliver Jason in the bedroom.

Even from birth, Jason was curiously silent. When the doctor held him up and slapped him, Jason didn't make a sound. For a moment, the doctor was alarmed, thinking that the child might have been stillborn. He slapped Jason once again, a little harder this time, again with no response. And then, he noticed that the child's eyes were open and staring straight at him with an astonishing expression—one that almost seemed like cold, venomous fury. It staggered him to see such searing hatred in the gaze of a newborn child but that surely would have been impossible, and he decided that it must have been only his imagination. Yet, for months thereafter, he dreamed of those loathsome, hate filled infant eyes.

Even as a child, Jason was unusual. No one ever saw him smile. He never gurgled with delight at the birthday colored mobile that was hung above his crib or at the toys that he was given. He never screamed when he needed to be changed and he never displayed no reaction whatsoever when his first teeth came in. He acted as though he didn't feel the pain. He never woke his mother in the middle of the night with crying. Sometimes, feeling the anxiety that every mother of a newborn child feels, Pamela Voorhees would awaken at night and tiptoe to the baby's room, just to reassure herself that there was nothing wrong. She would look down into the crib and see her infant Jason lying on his bed, his eyes wide open, staring at her. He never made a sound.

For a while, She was afraid that there might be something wrong with him—that perhaps he was autistic, one of those tragic children who were withdrawn into their own secret silent world. But Jason was not withdrawn. He noticed everything. His reactions were unusually quick and sharp. He was incredibly alert and his senses were remarkable acute. He grew strong quickly and he never became ill. He had no playmates because the other children avoided him. They seemed to be afraid of him. They ran away from him and complained about his creepy eyes. In truth, there was nothing at all unusual about his eyes except for the fact that, like a cobra, he never seemed to blink.

The neighbors could never really explain why when they were walking back from the train station after riding home from work, they always cross to the opposite side of the street whenever Jason was outside playing. It was as if some involuntary reaction had taken hold of them—some primal instinct warning them away. As commuters who worked in the city, they understood the subtle instincts that were at work. In a city full of predators, you learned to trust your feelings and they had some very strong feeling about the little Voorhees boy. He made their skin crawl. It wasn't something they openly admitted to themselves because it would have sounded silly and it made no sense.

But irrationally, it was there. It felt profoundly disturbing to be near him.

He baffled all his teachers, although he affected a few of them much more strongly. One of them abruptly quit her job and moved away from town. His third grade teacher, a shy young woman, offered her body to the principal if he would only move the boy out of her class. And a school psychologist who had tried to reach him wound up being reached himself and had a breakdown. The poor man was put into a straitjacket and taken to an institution.

It seemed that something strange happened to anyone who came near Jason Voorhees. All except his mother. A mother loves her child. She was always hovering near him, protectively, always ready to defend him. She had wanted her son to experience the pleasures of a summer in the woods and so she had taken the job as cook at Camp Crystal Lake just so she could stay near him. Only, as it turned out, she wasn't able to stay near enough. She was beside herself with worry the night he disappeared and when his clothes were found near the lake, Pamela Voorhees went berserk. It had been necessary to restrain her and take her to the county hospital where she was sedated. Although they never found the body of the boy, the official verdict was that it was death by drowning. Pamela Voorhees never recovered from the shock.

Jason's memories of what happened on the night he drowned were very dim. He remembered being frightened as his legs cramped up and he started to slip beneath the surface of the lake. He had a vague memory of struggling to stay afloat—of water rushing down his throat and filling up his lungs.

He could recall the terrifying sensation of sinking down into the murky lake. The fading light. The roaring in his ears. And then… nothing. At some point, consciousness returned but he had no way of telling how much time had passed. He came to on the shore, covered from head to toe with mud and slime. Apparently, having dragged himself out of the lake somehow, he coughed up water for a very long time.

He remembered laying in the bushes and retching, vomiting up slimy worms and maggots as his body fought its way back to life. It never occurred to him to wonder what it was that made him different from the others. Why they shrank from him as rabbits shrank from snakes. He never asked himself why he was always healthy. Why the slight injuries of childhood had always healed so quickly. He had never broken any bones. So no one ever had the opportunity to notice the supernatural way his body could repair itself. Pamela Voorhees never questioned it. Just as she never questioned his peculiar silence. A mother loves her child. She was simply grateful for having been blessed with a healthy little boy. Like father, like son. It did not occur to

Jason Voorhees to wonder just how long he had been underwater. He merely dragged himself deeper into the woods. Some primitive urge driving him to find a hole somewhere that he could crawl into—a dark place where he could rest and heal and wait until he could think of what to do

After a while, he returned back to the camp. His simple mind telling him that perhaps it was what he was supposed to do. Only there was no longer anybody there. The season had ended and the camp was closed. He broke into several of the cabins and found some cans of food and some old clothes for himself. In the process, he happened to catch sight of himself in a mirror and he recoiled in horror from the image that confronted him. He had been at the bottom of the lake for much longer than he realized. His flesh was trying to regenerate and heal itself but decomposition had set in. The worms had eaten at his face.

He fled into the woods, terrified of his own reflection. After a while, he found a sack and cut some holes in it then put it over his head and tied it down around his neck so that he wouldn't have to see the grotesque thing he had become if he saw his reflection in the lake.

He had no idea what to do or where to go. He wondered why his mother didn't come for him. He was afraid to leave the vicinity of the lake, for that was where he'd seen her last and he didn't want to miss her if she came looking for him. He didn't want to get in trouble. He lived like an animal—hiding in the woods, avoiding people, killing small creatures for food. He was vaguely aware of time passing though his days became an endless succession of wandering in the woods and foraging. He was aware of feeling cold as winter came. He took shelter in the cabins at the camp and huddled before fires he built inside the hearths. He had learned to make fires in camp, though several times he did it wrong let the flames get out of control, burning down a couple of the cabins before he got the hang of it.

On occasion, a policeman would drive by and see smoke curling from the chimney of a cabin that was supposed to be locked up for the winter. He would stop to investigate but Jason always ran back into the woods whenever anybody came. He was waiting for his mother and he did not want to get in trouble. He knew she would be very angry. And then one day, his mother had returned. Some people had come to open up the camp again and he had run off into the woods, hiding from them and watching as they rebuilt the place. Years had passed and he was now full grown though still with the mind of a small child. But whatever vestige of sanity might have been left in that child-like brain had been driven out by the hardships he had suffered and by the sight of his Mother, mad with grief, embarking upon her bloody murder spree. He had been afraid because she had seemed so

angry. He had hidden in the woods and watched on that fateful night when Pamela Voorhees had unleashed her vengeance on those whom she blamed for her son's death. She had killed them all except one girl and Jason had watched her struggle with the last survivor: Alice.

He had seen that awful moment when the girl had picked up the machete his mother had dropped and swung it with a savage desperation. He would never forget the sight of his mother's decapitated body falling to the ground like a puppet with its strings cut. The stump of her neck spouting arcs of bright red blood. Her head falling to the ground like a ripe melon, rolling several feet and then stopping. The eyelashes still fluttering as it lay upon the ground. When the girl had pushed off from the shore in the canoe, he had hesitantly crept out of hiding and approached his mother's body. He had stared down at it uncomprehendingly at the vivid red of her blood soaking into the ground, at the raw torn flesh and the white bone where the machete had chopped completely through the neck like an axe through a small sapling. He had knelt down and picked up his mother's severed head, holding it tenderly so that the sightless, deaf glazed eyes looked up at him. He had stared out into the darkness of the lake, looking in the direction where the girl who had done this to his mother had gone. And whatever fragile links his tortured mind still had with reality had snapped like the neck bones of little forest creatures that he caught and killed for his survival. The girl named Alice had escaped him once and the fury of his frustration knew no bounds. But then, she had come back and he knew that he had been given another chance to make things right. He had spotted her that day when she had returned to the camp. She had stood at the lakeshore near the boat dock, staring out over the water. She had returned to the place where her nightmare had happened, to see it once again, to confront it and to reassure herself that it was over now and that there was nothing left to fear.

When Jason had seen her standing there, the lust to kill had welled up within him, burning like napalm in his mind. He had started for her but before he could reach her, she had gotten back into her car and driven off. Fueled by a grim determination, he had followed her on the road back to the town of Crystal Lake, staying out of sight, waiting until night fell. Each night thereafter, he had stalked the streets of Crystal Lake, always keeping to the shadows, looking for her car. He had always taken his mother with him, carrying her decaying head inside a sack so that she could be with him when he did it. So that she would know that he was doing the right thing. Then, one night, he had seen her car parked outside an old Victorian house that had been converted into several apartments.

And he had seen the open window and he had killed her,

punching the ice pick through her skull and driving it deep into her brain. And then, he had taken her body with him, back to the cabin in the woods, carrying it over his shoulder and slipping out of town like a grisly specter in the night.

For a while, there had been peace. The rage had gone away and the hunger that had clawed at him like a ravenous animal had left him alone. He had stayed with his mother in the woods and for a while, he had been happy. They were together again. He had done the right thing and he knew she would be pleased.

Yet. Now, they had returned once more. The same ones who had hurt him. The same ones who had hurt his mother. And he knew that there would be no more rest for him until he killed them all. He had to do it. It's what his mother would have wanted.

Chapter 5

Everyone was ravenous when they broke for lunch shortly after noon. Ted put on an apron and a chef's hat and took charge of the grill while the others went back to the kitchen to get the hot dogs, hamburgers, potato chips, and paper plates. Ginny brought the chainsaw out and cut down several small dead trees then sawed them up into short lengths that would fit into the bricked in barbeque.

She brought the last of them over to Ted who already had several hot dogs going and then she carried the chainsaw back inside since she didn't like to leave it lying around.

"Come and get 'em!" Ted shouted at the top of his lungs.

"I'm right here!" said Jeff, standing about a foot away and shaking his head.

"No matter what Ted did, he always managed to get carried away. Ginny stopped just outside the cabin and looked over her shoulder. She had that funny feeling once again—that sense that she had barely just caught some movement out the corner of her eye. But when she turned around, there wasn't anything there. She went inside and safely put the chainsaw away in the storage closet. It was the sort of thing that could really cause a nasty accident, one slip and it could easily slice through muscle and sever an artery before the chain caught on some bone.

Maybe she was being a little paranoid, but it was better to be safe than sorry.

As she headed back to join the others, she found herself thinking about Jason Voorhees. Perhaps it was because Paul's story had set her imagination off. Or perhaps it was because the psychology student in her was fascinated by the tale. She wondered if the legend could possibly be true. What if the boy had never really drowned at all? What if he really were still alive? His mother was obviously a psychopathic personality. Apparently, nothing was known about his father. There was no reference to him in any of the stories about Camp Blood or in any of the newspaper articles about the killings.

What if the pathetic, disturbed child had run off into the woods? Perhaps to escape abusive parents?

Or maybe to get away from the cruelty of the other children? Or possibly just because the search for him had caused him to hide because he was afraid to get in trouble.

She recalled a story she had once read about a search for a missing retarded man in the pine barrens of New Jersey. Exceedingly shy and with the mind of a small child, the man had eluded searchers because every time he heard them getting close, he hid from them. It could have been like that with Jason. They had given up for dead—

stopped searching for his body and closed the camp.

What must it have been like that for him then? She thought, Living alone and frightened in the woods. Existing like an animal. How had he been able to survive?

She shook her head and pushed the thought out of her mind. It was, of course, only a hypothetical situation. Something that only might have occurred. It would have made for a fantastic case study if it were true. But then, surely someone would have discovered him by now. It had been a long time since all that had happened. The boy had drowned and that was that.

She didn't know why she was dwelling on this. There was plenty of time to think about abnormal psychology when she got back to school. This was supposed to be her vacation and she'd never be able to enjoy it if she couldn't kick back and relax.

Everyone was sitting down to eat by the time she returned. Ted had a hot dog in one hand and a barbeque fork in the other. His mouth was crammed full and there was mustard dribbling down his chin. Flourishing the fork as if he were a conductor leading an orchestra, he looked as happy as a kid in a mud puddle.

"Where's Terry?" Ginny asked, looking around.

Ted mumbled something with his mouth full. She didn't understand a word and asked him to repeat it. He swallowed and told her that Terry's dog had disappeared somewhere, and she had gone off to look for it. Ginny recalled seeing the little dog when they were out on the trail. She remembered how it had gone running off into the woods, barking at a squirrel or something and she suddenly realized that she hadn't seen the dog since then.

"Muffin!" Terry called, combing the brush along the trail. "Muffin! Here girl!"

He stood perfectly still and watched the girl approach. He imagined what it would be like to kill her.

The way he had killed Alice or the way he had killed Ralph. The way he would kill all of them one at a time, drawing it out so that each death would, if only for a little while, quench the relentless flame that burned within him.

"Muffin! Here girl!"

It had begun with Alice, the sensation of holding her while he drove the ice pick through her skull, sensing her terror when she realized what was happening, feeling her life draining away. He had awakened something deep within him. Some primordial predatory instinct that made him lust to kill again.

"Muffin!"

It was as if some voice within him urged him on, commanding him to kill. After Alice, there had been a brief respite from the frenzy

that had made his head feel as it was about to burst. It made his chest feel tight and it was difficult to breathe. He had felt as if he were on fire, burning up.

"Here girl! Here! Muffin!"

For a little while, after he had killed Alice and brought her home to Mother, it had gone away and then it had returned once more, even stronger than before. Much stronger. After he killed, he felt relief again but it didn't last very long. This time, it came back not only stronger than before, it came back faster. He felt it now, the tightness in his chest, the shortness of breath, the fire in his mind.

"Terry!" Ted shouted in the distance. "Lunch!"

She stopped not twenty feet from him and turned around.

"Okay, I'm coming!" she yelled back. She took one quick last look around and started running down the trail towards the picnic area. Terry was starting to get worried about Muffin. Her dog had never run away like that before. What could have happened to her?

Paul's threat to take them running after lunch turned out to be nothing more than a bluff and, much to their relieve, he consented to let them have a free afternoon for swimming after his first aid lecture.

While everyone changed into their swimsuits and gathered up at the lake, Sandra took Jeff aside.

"Jeff," she said, looking around to see if anyone was within earshot. "You ready?"

He looked puzzled.

"For what?"

"Camp Blood!" she said, her eyes lit up with excitement. He made a wry face at her and shook his head.

"Come on, Sandra. You know we're not supposed to go near that place."

"Oh come on, it's only a short walk," she urged him. "They'll never even know we're gone."

He looked reluctant.

"Jeff, I'm serious," said Sandra, "I really want to see it. When we get back to the city, we can tell everyone that we were there."

He hesitated, undecided. She took him by the arm and pulled.

"Oh, come on you chickenshit."

They checked to make sure there was no one watching them. Then Sandra said, "Okay, let's go!"

And they quickly slipped away into the woods. They walked through the trees for a short while to keep out of site and then they cut back down the trail, following the shoreline, heading toward Camp Crystal Lake.

While the other counselors swam and sung themselves down by the lake, Jeff and Sandra made their way toward the deserted

Camp Blood like a couple of kids playing hooky, they enjoyed the feeling of doing something that they weren't supposed to do. They held hand and followed the trail as it wound its serpentine way around the lake. Before long, they reached a place that had once been a large clearing. Perhaps a packed dirt parking lot. Only now, it was covered with dead leaves and overgrown with weeds, brush, and young saplings.

Moments later, they came to a rusty barbed wire fence, affixed to it was an old metal sign that said: NO TRESSPASSING

Part of the fence had fallen down, allowing them easy access. It was almost as if they were being invited in.

"This must be it," said Jeff, uneasily.

Sandra too his arm and moved a little closer to him. She seemed to have lost some of her confidence.

"Yeah," she said, glancing all around. They stepped over the fence and entered the grounds of Camp Crystal Lake. Camp Blood.

There seemed to be something ominous about the place. A feeling that was almost tangible. Sandra wondered if it was something about the place itself or if she was experiencing strange vibes because she knew about what had happened here. She recalled her older brother who had gone to school in Los Angeles, telling her about the time that some friends had shown him the ranch where Charles Manson and his murderous followers had lived.

She hadn't even been born when the grisly Tate/Labianca murders had shocked the nation but years later, she saw the events depicted in a film called "Helter Skelter." There wasn't much left of the place, her brother had said. Only the gateposts and foundations, pretty much all that remained of the Infamous Spahn Ranch, where Mason played satanic guru to his followers. But he told her there was an eerie atmosphere about the entire area. An aura that seemed pregnant with foreboding as the former tenants had left behind an indelible evil spiritual impression of their presence. And that was exactly how she felt right now.

It was almost as if the place was haunted, though of course that was ridiculous. But nevertheless, there was something about it that had made her draw closer to Jeff and look around nervously. They were all alone out here but she was starting to have the most particular feeling as if someone or something was watching them. They could see the ruins of several cabins, a couple of them looked as if they had been burned down. The boards were blackened and rotting and the structures were overgrown with woods and ivy. It was as if the woods were trying to reclaim the place, to swallow it and wipe out the memory of what had happened here.

Sandra, feeling very scared, had glanced at Jeff and saw that

he to looked uneasy.

"Oh my God!" Sandra suddenly said, stopping and pulling back on Jeff's arm. He jumped about a foot, startled by her reaction. She pointed down at their feet at the remains of a small animal. All that was left of it were a few tufts of fur and shattered bones. Some entrails and some bloody meat that had been half devoured. It looked freshly killed as if it had just been torn apart.

"Looks like… like a dog," Sandra said softly.

They all knew that Muffin was missing. Jeff bent down to look at it more closely. He grimaced at the smell.

"Too mangled to tell," he said.

Sandra swallowed nervously.

"What do you think did it?" she said.

Jeff shook his head.

"Wild animal, I guess."

There was a knot forming in Sandra's stomach. What if it wasn't a wild animal, she thought, what if it was something worse? The feeling that they were not alone grew stronger. She wanted nothing more than to leave this creepy place. Perhaps her imagination was running wild but she was even starting to think that she could hear footsteps approaching. She screamed as a large hand reached past her, grabbed Jeff by the shoulder and spun him around violently.

They stood face to face with the beefy deputy Sheriff of Crystal Lake. He did not look very happy.

Behind him, through the trees, they could see the flashing lights of his squad car on the dirt road leading to the camp.

"What are you kids doing out here?" he snapped.

Jeff glanced at Sandra as if to say 'Well… that's another fine mess you've gotten us into.'

They were marched back to the squad car and told to sit in the back seat behind the steel grating.

Then, the deputy slammed the door and got into the front. They noticed that there were no door handles on the inside. Sandra wandered if they had been placed under arrest. Weren't they supposed to have their rights read to them first? She was tempted to ask the cop about it but decided that under the circumstances, it might be better to say nothing.

They were driven back to the counselor training center and everyone saw them sitting in the back like common criminals as the squad car pulled up to the main house with its lights flashing. The deputy ushered them into Paul's office and they stood with their heads lowered, looking embarrassed as the policeman read Paul Holt the riot act.

"You're gonna have to keep your people away from that place,

Holt," the deputy said in a tone that brooked no nonsense. "It's condemned. Next time I catch anyone over there, I'm gonna run them in."

Spoke up, feeling guilty that Paul had to sit there and take the blame on their account.

"He told us not to—"

Paul interrupted him.

"Let me handle this," he said.

"I might even get a warrant against YOU," the deputy added, looking at Paul threateningly.

"Oh really?" Paul said, raising his eyebrows, not looking intimidated in the least. Ginny walked in, carrying a clipboard as if she had done some business in the office, though it was only an excuse to see what was going on. She saw Paul sitting at his desk, looking up at the big cop who towered over him. The deputy placed his hands on the edge of Paul's desk and leaned forward towards Paul.

"Look, Holt," he said, "people say what you're doing with these kids is great. You've got a good reputation but if I was you, I'd have located in the next county." He paused. "You're too close," he said. "Things have been quiet for five years and that's the way we want to keep it."

"So do I, officer," Paul said, "So do I."

He glanced at Jeff and Sandra standing behind the deputy.

"Okay you two," he said, "Take off and I'll talk to you at dinner."

"Thanks, Mr. Holt," said Sandra, wanting nothing more than to get out of there.

"It won't happen again," Jeff said as they walked out the door.

The deputy turned to watch them leave and then looked back at Paul, obviously aggravated.

"That's it?" he said, "You're not even going to reprimand them? No punishment?"

He couldn't believe it.

"What kind of place is this?"

"Ginny," said Paul.

"Yes, Paul?" she glanced at the cop briefly then looked at him.

"No seconds on dessert for Jeff and Sandra tonight," he said with a perfectly straight face. Ginny suppressed a smile. Disgusted, the deputy shook his head and left.

Sandra was very quiet as they walked away from the main house, heading down the path towards their cabins. Jeff looked at her with concern. Fortunately, it hadn't been such a big dead with the cop. They'd gotten off easy yet something was clearly bothering her.

"You okay?" he said.

She took a deep breath and sighed heavily.

"Should we tell Terry? You know… about what we saw."

Jeff thought back to the remains of the small creature they had seen, torn to pieces at Camp Crystal Lake. He could imagine how Terry would react if they had told her about it.

"No way," he said, empathetically. "As far as I'm concerned, we didn't see a thing."

As deputy Winslow drove away from Paul Holt's counselor training center, he wondered if he had been too easy on those kids. He had definitely been too easy on Holt. That much was certain.

Man, he thought, you tried to do a guy a favor and all he does is give you a hard time.

That bit about "no seconds on dessert" was an obvious slap in the face. A complete disregard of his authority. You tried to give a guy a break because he comes to town with good intentions, Winslow thought, because he moves in with his own business, that was good for the community, admittedly.

And it was a very small business and a seasonal one at that. But it was business just the same and you always tried to help out the local businesspeople. Things were tough enough what with the new mall under construction over in the next town and everybody planning to take their retail business over there. So far, three of the merchants in town had already made arrangements to close down their stores in Crystal Lake and reopen in the mall when it was completed. At least four more that Winslow knew of were thinking about it seriously. Their overhead would be much steeper at the mall but they would have a lot more walk-in trade and they were dying in Crystal Lake.

Hell. Everyone was dying. Angie Black had packed up her herbs and fold remedies, closed down her plant nursery and moved right out of town. She had gone to the big city where she planned to open up some sort of Occult supply store or something. She said that the city people were suckers for things like that. Tarot decks. Astrological readings. Incense and what not. She said she simply had to come up with a new wrinkle and make a fresh start someplace else.

It had been the same thing with Tom Dunn and his smoke shop. He just couldn't make a living in Crystal Lake anymore, so he had closed up and moved away to New York City. Doc Hanson had moved away too. Bought into some partnership with several city doctors in a medical complex. Miss Willis over at the elementary school had quit her job and gone to Colorado to become a writer.

It was like that everywhere, thought Winslow, small towns were dying all over the country but Crystal Lake was particularly hard hit especially after what had happened here. Everyone was leaving. Even the Sheriff was talking about quitting and going out west to some place like Wyoming or Montana and getting a job on the highway patrol or

some county police force.

Winslow had always hope he'd have the chance to be promoted but it wasn't going to be much fun being the Sheriff of a ghost town. And the way things were going, that was the way Crystal Lake was headed. Paul Holt was the first to come into town with a new business in five years. The chamber of commerce was eager to keep him happy and as a result, he had pretty good relations with the people in the town. But although Winslow was able to appreciate what even the smallest business would mean to Crystal Lake's economy, he was far from convinced that Paul Holt's type of business was the sort that they really needed.

The members of the chamber had argued that if he could make a go of it out there on the lake, it could bring more people into town. Other camps would send their counselors there to train in the beginning of the summer. And perhaps, some more summer camps would open up out there. If things would pick up again during the summer, then more tourists would be coming in. And if they came during the summer, things were bound to pick up during the hunting and fishing season later in the year.

Once they had seen the pretty country, maybe some of those hunters and fishermen would think about moving to Crystal Lake to get away from the big city. You could never tell. The members of the chambers said all these things could easily add up to another boom for Crystal Lake. Lord knows they needed it. Besides, they said, with everyone moving out of town, they needed to encourage anybody who came in and tried to make a start with something, no matter how small. Beggars couldn't very well be choosers.

Winslow had conceded the point but he had reminded them of what had happened the last time someone had tried to start something out by Crystal Lake. About five years ago, he had said, pointedly, there had been no need to elaborate. They had all known he mean Steve Christy's effort to open up Camp Crystal Lake again. They had remembered all too well the murders at Camp Blood.

"You really want another summer camp out there?" Winslow asked. "You really want more kids running around in the woods and getting into God-knows what sort of trouble? Having sex out there and smoking dope? That was what had all started it last time, remember?"

But they hadn't listened to him. They still clung to the dream that someone would come out to Crystal Lake and see how beautiful it was and decide to buy up a big piece of the lake property and put in a development. Condos, Winslow thought with disgust. Sweet Jesus… you never know the members of the chambers had said, maybe one of the kids who would come out to that training center Holt is running would have a father who's a big wheel in real estate development. It

wasn't so farfetched an idea. It could happen.

Yeah, sure. Don't hold your breath, Winslow had thought, but since they were the ones who paid his salary, he had gone along with it and promised to give Holt every break he could in case any of the kids got a little out of hand. That was precisely what had happened, and young Mr. Holt couldn't even be bothered to show his appreciation. Worse, he had responded with complete contempt for police authority. But what the hell could you expect, thought Winslow, that Holt wasn't much more than a kid himself.

Kids nowadays simply had no respect for authority. It came from having parents that were too damn permissive, Winslow thought. He should have locked those two kids up to teach them a lesson and then made that smartass Holt post bail or else explain to their parents why their children had been slapped in jail while under his responsibility. If he had done that, he had a feeling Holt would have probably deprived them of a lot more than just seconds on dessert. In any case, that was the last break those people would ever get from him.

His thoughts were interrupted as a figure suddenly darted across the road in front of him. Someone had burst out of the bushes to the side of the road, running directly across his path and plunging into the woods. It happened so quickly that Winslow didn't get a very good look at him. He barely had time to slam on the brakes. He struck his steering wheel with his fists. He couldn't believe it. He had just gotten through telling those people that the property was condemned and that he wouldn't tolerate any more intrusions there and now, here was another one of them heading right for the old camp.

He opened the door and stepped out.

"Hey!" he called after the rapidly retreating figure.

"Hey you!"

There was no response. Whoever it was continued running. Winslow could hear him crashing through the underbrush. With a curse, the deputy took off after the fleeing figure, pursuing him on foot.

"Hold it!" he shouted, furious at not having his commands obeyed. He swore under his breath and continued running through the woods, stumbling over fallen logs, pushing branches away from his face and breathing hard from the unaccustomed exertions. Too much beer at the roadhouse every night after his shift was taking its toll.

Damn kids, he thought as he tripped over a vine and almost fell. That's it. That's absolutely the last straw. You give him an inch and they take a goddamn yard. Well, this time, they were going to jail.

He was brought up short by a small stream. He could no longer hear whomever it was he was chasing.

He stood perfectly still for a moment, listening for the slightest

tell-tale sound but the woods suddenly went completely quiet. Even the birds were silent. There was only the sound of the wind rustling through the trees and the water trickling over the rocks.

He bent over and peered intently into the shallow stream. Yes, there they were. Footprints in the mud of the stream bed. Not getting eradicated by the flowing water meaning that whoever it was had only splashed through the stream a few moments ago.

Winslow leapt across the stream, not quite clearing it and getting his feet wet. He stopped for a moment, breathing heavily. And then, he continued jogging through the woods. He'd had about enough of this nonsense. Whoever it was would be awful goddamned sorry when he caught up with them. An experienced backwoods tracker from years of hunting in this country, Winslow was easily able to spot the broken branches where his fleeing query had plunged through the thicket on the opposite side of the stream.

He pushed through into a clearing littered with dead leaves and pine boughs. The branches overhead caused the waning light to break through the clearing in diffused beams which gave the place a soft, eerie glow.

Across the clearing from Winslow stood a dilapidated two room cabin. Little more than a tumbled down shack, patched together with tar paper, corrugated tin, and old rotting boards nailed up haphazardly. It was overgrown with weeds and ivy and covered with moss and fungus where the wood was disintegrating from the moisture seeping through.

Winslow looked around and saw a blackened foundation a short distance away on the opposite side of the clearing. It was mostly crumbling concrete and charred beams, all that remained of another cabin that had burned down some time ago. He had pursued his query directly to the grounds of the long-abandoned Camp Crystal Lake.

Judging only by the appearance of this one cabin, or what was left of it, someone had actually been trying to preserve it, although in a very sloppy way. His first thought was perhaps some of the local kids had found this securitous back way into the camp from the country road, thereby avoiding the dirt road that led down to the camp from the other side where they might have been spotted.

He thought perhaps they had tried to patch the old place back together so they could use it as a secret clubhouse. It was just the sort of thing that kids would do and he really couldn't blame them for it. He'd gone in for the same sort of thing himself when he was just a kid but he'd have to put a stop to it immediately.

These old ruined buildings were dangerous. They should have been torn down a long time ago.

Some kid could fall through a rotting floor or the roof could cave

in. There could even be snakes or poisonous spiders living in these crumbling old homes, since they like rotting wood and moist, dark spaces.

Winslow was thinking about secret hideouts as he walked up to the cabin but when he pushed through the squeaky wooden door, those thoughts fled from his mind at once. He gasped and his face twisted into a grimace of disgust and disbelief as he looked around the interior of the cabin. The stench was unbelievable. A floorboard creaked loudly as he stepped inside, holding his breath and waiting for his eyes to become accustomed to the dim light.

The inside of the cabin was thoroughly trashed. Pieces of the roof were missing. A grime encrusted window barely let in any light at all and the glass was gone completely from the window on the other side, replaced by a filthy moth-eaten scrap of cloth tacked over the frame like a sort of curtain.

However, not even the cruel breeze that came in through the busted window could dissipate the nauseating smell inside the place. It was the stink of urine and feces. The smell of rotting food and decomposing flesh. Winslow knew that homicide detectives in the city often smoked cigars and cigarettes when they had to go into a room where a dead body had been laying, undiscovered for several days because the because the odor of the burning tobacco helped to mask the smell.

However, it would have taken an entire burning field of tobacco to even make a dent in this overpowering stink that made his eyes water. One of the pantry doors was hanging by a rusted hinge. Another was missing entirely, revealing empty shelves caked with dirt and grime, shrouded with spiderwebs and littered with rat droppings.

Dirty work clothes that looked as if they had been picked out of some trash heap were thrown together in a filthy pile beside an old stained mattress with the stuffing coming out of it. Scraps of food and the rotten remains of small animals such as squirrels and rabbits were scattered here and there about the room. There were several candles and on the shelf beneath the cracked and peeling cabinet, were a couple of unbelievably filthy iron pans encrusted with dried blood and grease.

Patched together, broken furniture was scattered about the room and a rag of a curtain concealed the entry to another room.

Half expecting to find his query hiding there, Winslow reached for the curtain. A sudden bang behind him made him spin around. His hand going for his holster. However, it was only the rusted through hinge holding up the pantry door finally giving way and allowing the door to fall crashing to the floor.

Winslow sighed with relief and turned back to the curtain,

looked aide and recoiled, gagging on the incredibly foul odor that assaulted him. It was a bathroom. The water had, of course, been turned off for years so the toilet didn't flush. The evidence was inconvertible. Someone had actually been living here, but living like some savage beast in the most subhuman conditions imaginable. This was no secret clubhouse for some kids but the home of some half-human derelict. Some pathetic, mentally incompetent bum who had somehow stumbled upon this place and taken refuge here.

So much for the legend of Jason Voorhees, Winslow thought, here was the answer. The explanation for all the reports of figures skulking through the nights and picking through the trash heaps, shadow briefly glimpsed just off the wooded trails, the mysterious rustling in the night just beyond the campgrounds and the occasional thefts from the outlying homes located on the edge of town.

Some miserable homeless benighted wanderer. A pathetic mental patient cut loose from some hospital because his insurance had run out, had taken refuge in this long-abandoned cabin, running off into the woods and hiding whenever anyone came near. This was how the whole thing got started, Winslow thought. Everyone was afraid of nothing more than some pitiful, crazy bum who was merely trying to stay alive. He looked toward the heavy wooden door leading to the back room of the cabin where the poor bastard was probably hiding, like some wounded animal, scared of his own shadow. Well, no one should have to live like this.

He'd go on there, cuff the poor guy and take him off to jail. Hell, he'd be doing him a favor. The food and living conditions there would be at least 200% better than what he had out here and in the morning, the judge would hold a hearing and find someplace or something that would take him.

Winslow put his hand on the rusty metal knob and turned it. The door creaked open an inch or two then stuck.

He grunted and pushed at it. It moved a little more but still resisted his efforts. He stuck the toe of his boot into the crack and put his shoulder to it. With a loud creaking sound, the door swung open.

Winslow staggered into the room as the door suddenly gave way before him and what he found inside stopped him short as if he'd run into brick wall. His eyes went wide with horror and his breath caught. His knees became weak and his stomach felt as if someone had kicked him there. He suddenly felt dizzy as his mind rebelled against the acceptable reality of what was in the back room of that rotting cabin. He grasped the door jab to steady himself. He felt faint, overpowered by the awesome smell and grisly sight that suddenly confronted him.

"Oh my God!" he whispered, unable to take his eyes away from

the tableau before him. Behind him, a board creaked softly, a hand raised a pick hammer high overhead and, before Winslow could react to the tell-tale sound behind him, the hammer came down with brutal swiftness, striking him in the back of the head. The pick's point smashed through his skull and buried itself deep in his brain in one, savagely, powerful blow.

Winslow felt a brief incandescent moment of searing pain and then all feeling went away forever.

He was already dead when he crumpled to the floor.

Chapter 6

It was getting dark and the hanging party lights illuminated the porch of the main house as the counselor trainees finished up their dinner. Paul stood up and banged on the table for attention.

"Okay, people," he said. "Today was fun and games, right? I like to start slow—ease you into it."

The response was a chorus of groans and weary muttering. If today was only "starting slow," they didn't want to know about getting up to speed. So far as they were all concerned, they had signed up for a summer camp counselor training course, not survival lessons. Paul acted as if he were training a mercenary unit.

"Well, tomorrow we get serious," said Paul to their complete disbelief. "If anybody wants a last night on the town, now's your chance."

"Me! Me!" said Ted, raising his hand like a small boy, begging to be called on in class. Paul smiled.

Ginny started gathering up the dishes.

"Okay, who else?" Paul said, magnanimously. "We want to go in as few cars as possible."

Half a dozen hands shot up.

"Oh, and by the way," said Paul, "Our two wanderers have volunteered to stay behind and watch the camp." He glanced pointedly at Jeff and Sandra. "Haven't they?" He said, a slight edge to his voice.

Jeff and Sandra exchanged glances, sighed and quietly lowered their hands.

"Right, Mr. Holt," Jeff said.

"Sure," said Sandra with resignation.

Terri put her hand around Sandra, commiserating with her.

"I think I'll stay, too," she said. "Muffin might show up."

The little dog was missing and Terri was trying hard not to show how worried she was about her pet.

Scott overheard her and immediately changed his mind about going into town.

"I think I'll hang around, too," he said with exaggerated nonchalance. He threw in a yawn for good measure. "I'm pretty wiped out."

Vicky saddled up to Mark. "You staying?"

"Yeah," said Mark with a self-conscious shrug. "Nothing spoils a party faster than a drunk in a wheelchair."

"That's crap," said Vicky, angry at his putting himself down like that. She hesitated, knowing he was sensitive and proud.

"Look," she said, not wanting to sound as if she was feeling sorry for him because what she was really starting to feel was

something entirely different. "We can go together if you like."

Mark gave her a tight smile.

"Appreciate it," he said, "But I'm in training." It was his stock line—his excuse for everything. For denying himself the slightest pleasure. Vicky gave him a steady look.

"Then I'm staying too," she said softly.

Mark shrugged awkwardly.

"Suit yourself."

Paul watched with mild amazement as most of his charges backed out of his offer of a last night on the town. This didn't seem like them at all. He'd never known kids to turn down a chance to party.

Maybe he really had been pushing them too hard. He glanced at Ginny.

"How about it, second in command?" he said. "You going?"

"You buying?" said Ginny with a grin.

"Sure," Paul said.

"You're on," she said.

After the tables were cleared away and the dishes were all done, Ted borrowed the keys to Jeff's pickup truck, swearing that he'd be careful and leave it parked in town or let someone else drive if he had too many drinks.

Paul decided to throw caution to the winds and ride with Ginny in her VW Bug. Miraculously, it started right up.

"Now I know how you can afford tuition to grad school," Paul joked as he got in beside Ginny. "You always find some fool to fix your car and stake you to some beer."

"You got it," she said shifting into first and chugging off after Ted in Jeff's big pickup.

Behind them, the counselors drifted back into the house. Terri silently wandered off away from the others, disturbed about her missing dog. It wasn't like Muffin to run away like this, though Muffin had never been out in the woods before, either. She had debated leaving Muffin at home but finally she hadn't been able to bring herself to do it. Muffin was her friend and it wouldn't be right to leave her alone all summer, feeling abandoned.

She realized that the woods provided dozens upon dozens of new, fascinating sights and sounds and smells for a dog that had spent most of its life in the suburbs and Terry guessed that Muffin was probably exploring.

When Muffin became hungry, she'd come back. At least that was what Terry fervently hoped. She didn't think she'd ever be able to forgive herself if something happened to Muffin because of her selfishness of wanting to bring the little dog along. She walked down the path leading to the lake, calling out for Muffin as she went, hoping

to hear a joyful barking in response but there was no sign of Muffin. The sun had gone down and it was dark now. Terry was starting to feel worried.

The casino was a rectangular shaped building, located on the edge of town. Neon beer signs lit up all the windows and live music throbbed out into the night. The parking lot was full and the interior of the bar was crowded with locals from Crystal Lake and several of the surrounding villages. It was a friendly redneck sort of joint, with most of the patrons dressed in jeans and buffalo-plaid flannels, cowboy straws and baseball caps. The band was laying down some hot and heavy rock and roll. They just finished doing their version of Alice Cooper's "Under my Wheels" and now, they were into a country number as people got out on the dance floor to shake it loose.

Ted watched the cute young dark-haired waitress, Maggie, thread her way through the dancing couples and between the tables, balancing a tray of drinks. The moment he came in, he spotted her and one look at those dimples, that saucy expression, that trim waist, and tight ass and those mini skirted legs that were shaped to sheer perfection and Ted knew he was lost beyond all hope of redemption.

As she approached, Ted picked up two empty amber bottles of the dark Boulder beer he had been drinking and unbelievable fine brew, shipped in from Colorado and he brought them up to his eyes as if they were binoculars.

"Oh, look at this," he said, starting at Maggie through the bottoms of the bottles. He really couldn't see her very well through the thick amber glass but if he'd been able to see her, he might not have had the courage to speak up at all.

"I think I'm in love," he said.

Maggie came up to stand directly in front of him. She leaned on the bar between them and smiled, indicating the eight empty bottles in front of Ted.

"Are you sure you don't want me to clear these?" she said, raising her eyebrows.

"No," said Ted with a grin. "I'm collecting these."

"Have it your way, honey," Maggie said, grinning at him. "I just don't want the bar to fall down on you."

She was astonished at this capacity. She'd seen guys drink half as much and be drunk on their asses but Ted was one of those rare people whose metabolism were extremely efficient. Maggie was studying to be a pharmacist and she knew that being able to handle a lot of booze was not so much a matter of machismo as it was a simple matter of biology. Some people's metabolisms were able to handle the traumatic influx of a lot of alcohol due to the efficiency of the enzymes in their livers though, this was not by any means a ticket to a life of

hard and fast drinking. It simply meant that they could handle the abuse a little better than most people. Eventually, if the pattern of over-indulgence, it would be as toxic to them as to anybody else.

She could tell that the beers were starting to get to Ted but unlike a lot of people, he wasn't becoming obnoxious as he started to get drunk. Instead, he was merely loosening up a little, losing his natural shyness and finding the courage to say things that most guys wouldn't have any trouble saying when they were sober. Working in a bar, she had heard just about every line in the book but there was something about the adorably clumsy way that Ted was coming on to her that was really sweet and endearing. And he was cute, too. She'd much rather have a guy who had an easygoing personality and didn't take himself all that seriously than some macho bonehead who thought he was God's gift to women. She smiled and winked at Ted before she moved away to take care of some other customers.

"I think she likes you," Paul said, smiling and giving Ted a friendly nudge with his elbow. Ted grinned like a fat kid in an ice cream parlor as he watched Maggie walk away.

"I think so, too," he said, convinced that she was putting just a little bit extra into her naturally sexy walk just for his sake. She knew he was attracted to her and she was returning his signals in her own delightful way. He couldn't believe it. Things like this simply didn't happen to him. Was it possible she really liked him? Life was truly wonderful, thought Ted. Take all the fears and paranoias out of the world and they don't mean a thing when two people start clicking with each other. Taking the biggest chance of all in the final analysis, love really was the biggest gamble and the only one worth taking.

He took a swig of beer then suddenly got serious.

"You know," he said to Paul, thinking about what had happened earlier that day, "This whole thing is ridiculous, really. Two of our kids get hauled in today because five years ago a girl panics and falls out of a canoe. It's absurd."

Ginny pursed her lips as she toyed with her beer bottle.

"But what if there is a Jason?" She wondered aloud.

Paul snorted.

"Oh, bullshit, Ginny."

She ignored the remark. Ted's comment had given her the opportunity to voice some of the thoughts she'd been having ever since she had arrived at Crystal Lake.

"What if there is some kind of boy-beast roaming around Camp Crystal Lake?" she wondered out loud. "Let's think beyond the legend. Try to put it in real terms. You know, what would he be? An out of control psychopath? A frightened retard? A child trapped in a man's body?" She glanced at Paul who was more familiar with the story than

she was. "He'd be grown by now, right?"

Paul nodded, an amused expression on his face. "Right," he said, humoring her.

"And the only person who ever really knew him was his mother," Ginny said. She tried to imagine what it must have been like for young Jason Voorhees, an outsider no matter where he went or what he did.

"He never had any friends. She was everything to him."

"Yeah," Paul said, wryly. "A deranged killer."

"No, no," Ginny protested. "You're missing my whole point. I doubt that Jason would have even known the meaning of death or at least until that horrible night."

Her voice trailed off as she tried to reconstruct what must have happened on that fateful night at Camp Crystal Lake when Pamela Voorhees had gone on her maddened killing spree.

"He must have seen the whole thing happen," Ginny said, thinking out loud, trying to fit the elements of he legend with the possible reality. "He must have seen his mother killed just because she loved him," she said, her eyes staring intently off into the distance. "Wasn't that what her revenge was all about?" she asked Paul. "Her sense of loss, her rage of what she though happened, her love for him?"

She glanced from Ted to Paul. They were watching her with interest as if they were not certain if she was actually being serious or not.

"Bizarre, isn't it?" said Ginny. "I mean, just think about it. He has to be crying out for her return—her resurrection. She turned to Paul. "What do you think?"

Paul grinned and shook his head.

"I think you're drunk," he said.

Ted laughed and picked up his beer bottle. He had to search a minute to find the full one in the midst of all the empties. "I'll drink to that," he said. He waved at Maggie. "Hit us again, sweetheart."

"Not me," said Ginny, knowing when she'd reached her limit. She glanced at Paul.

"I'm serious about this, Paul." Slightly annoyed at his dismissing her ideas that way.

"Jason is a legend, Ginny," Paul said patiently. "A legend."

Terry stood looking out across the dark lake, savoring the silence of the moment. She had been walking around, calling Muffin without avail. She stood on the lakeshore and sighed, afraid to admit to herself the possibility that something might have happened to her little dog.

It's all my fault, she thought. Muffin's never been out in the

woods before. I should have brought a collar and a leash for her.

Still, she had seemed so happy running about like a puppy, enjoying the experience of a completely new environment. Just as she herself was enjoying the freedom of being away from her parents and her schoolmates, her hometown, and everything she knew. Meeting new people and having new experiences. You can't always be protected, she thought. Sometimes you just have to take a chance and open yourself up to new experiences.

Sure, opening yourself up to new things involved a certain degree of risk but if you ever took any risks, you never learned anything new.

She found herself thinking about Scott. He was really good looking and he seemed like a nice guy, if only he didn't act like such a dork. What was it about guys, she wondered, that they seemed to think a girl could only be interested in someone who was always smooth and cool, completely in control.

Why did they always have to play these games? These silly bullshit games that always manifested themselves as aggressive behavior toward the girls who were they were attracted to? Why couldn't they simply kick back and chill out? Be honest with their feelings, come right out and tell a girl they liked her and wanted to get to know her better? Was that really all that hard to do?

Maybe part of it is our own fault, Terry thought, Maybe we put too much pressure on them. Christ, they get enough pressure from the other guys they hang out with. It's not as if they need any more pressure from the girls. She imagined what it must be like in a boy's locker room. The sort of conversations they must have. Some guy gets a date with a really foxy looking girl and immediately all his friends want to know how far he got with her.

Hey man, what's the score? Did you get laid? You get any pussy off her? What's she like? I hear she's real hot.

Of course, there was a certain amount of pressure on the guy to not look like a complete wimp. He had to pretend that he had made out, so to speak, even if all he wanted to do was go out to a movie with a girl and maybe a bite to eat afterward. Perhaps just sit in the car and talk and get close to someone. Getting close to someone didn't really have anything to do with fucking. Terry had no doubts on that score. Fucking was really very easy. If you could do sit-ups or pushups, you could fuck.

It was a physical act and nothing more. Fucking didn't make you a man and it sure as hell didn't make you a woman. No more than doing pushups or setups made you a man or woman. There was nothing complicated about it all. But the consequences of it were. There were some pretty serious implications involved in having sex,

both emotional and physical.

If you were smart, you could take some precautions to make sure you didn't get pregnant or contract some disease but there was a lot more to it than that. Something that too many of her friends seemed to forget or just not think about. For one that, there was no such thing as "safe sex," not matter what anyone said. Terry knew of several girls who had gotten pregnant after being guys who used condoms. A condom could break or have a pinhole in it. Or it could actually come off inside the girl. She heard stories of that happening. She had even heard of a case where a girl had gotten pregnant with an IUD. A diaphragm was no sure thing either. And birth control pills, while probably the safest way to go, could still have some hazardous side effects. However, beyond the mere physical consequences that went along with having sex, there were the emotional consequences too which could be a lot more serious, even if they did not result in pregnancy.

Making love with someone was about the most intimate thing that you could do and if you weren't ready it for it emotionally, it could really mess you up. After all, there was a big difference between making love and having sex and if one person thought that he or she was "making love" while the other person only thought they were "fucking" then someone was being used.

Terry was no prude. Far from it. She had gone all the way with guys before but it had never really meant much. Oh, it had felt nice alright, but when it came right down to it, there had to be a lot more to it than that and if there was one thing Terry had learned, it was that love and sex were completely different things. You could have love without sex and it could still be special but sex without love didn't mean very much at all.

Terry was not inhibited about the way she looked. She was proud of herself. She had a naturally great body and she took special care to keep it that way. With a figure like hers, she had learned early on that men would stare at her. It didn't really bother her. Sometimes, just to show them what it felt like, she would stare back and every time it happened, they always looked away. What bothered Terry was people who made assumptions about her based on their own preconceptions about the way she looked. Scott didn't really do that but in his own way, he was just as frustrating.

She thought that perhaps a guy as handsome as Scott might understand about people making superficial comments based on the way someone looked but he seemed to have the same misconceptions as a lot of guys she'd known. He seemed to think that a simple, honest direct approach would never work because someone who looked the way she did must have heard every line there was. So Scott seemed

to think that the way to go about it was to tease her and play games with her just to prove that he was not intimidated by her.

She sighed. Some guys just never grew up. We are all so afraid of being rejected, Terry thought, that we can’t even talk to one another anymore.

She kicked off her shoes and felt the water with her toes. It was cold but not too cold for swimming.

She looked around. The others were all back up at the main house. It was dark and she was all alone.

The only illumination came from the spotlight mounted on the boathouse roof. It reflected in shimmering ripples off the dark water.

Why not? She thought. She peeled off her sweatshirt and then took off her pants, putting them down by rock close to the shore. Then she stripped off her panties and waded naked into the dark, cool lake. When she got up to her thighs, she took a deep breath and plunged in, experiencing the bracing shock of the cold water.

After a moment, she was used to it and she started an easy Australian crawl stroke, cutting through the dark water and then ducking down beneath it, breast stroking underwater for a short distance and then bursting up for a deep breath of cool air. It felt great to skinny dip alone at night but after a while, she started to feel cold and swam toward shore.

She came up feeling refreshed and invigorated, although the wind had picked up slightly and she hugged herself against chill. And then she noticed that her clothes were gone for a moment. She stood still, uncertain if she was looking in the right place or not. And then, she heard a chuckle and spun around to see Scott coming out from behind the boathouse, carrying her clothes in his arms.

"Looking for something?" he said, grinning and eying her appreciate.

She covered herself with her arms and looked at him with exasperation.

"Come and get ‘em." He said, backing away towards the woods as she approached, tossing her one piece of clothing at a time, starting with her sneakers. First one, then the other, followed by her panties and her sweatpants. She followed him, hopping on foot to put her sneakers on. Then slipping on her panties and her sweatpants. She cursed him under her breath as he kept laughing and dancing away from her reach, not at all amused by this childish display.

"If I get my hands on you…"

Scott laughed and dangled the shirt just beyond her reach, jerking it away each time she tried to get it from him.

"Scott! It’s no longer funny," she said. He backed away from her, taunting her and waving her shirt as if he were a bullfighter but

then his laughter was cut short abruptly as his feet were snapped out from under him and he was yanked upside down into the air.

"Ahhhhh!" he shouted. "Help!"

He had stepped into a snare and now, he hung twisted from the spring pole by his heels, completely helpless.

"God damn that Paul" Scott swore, furiously. "Him and his wilderness bullshit."

Terry slipped on her shirt and glanced at him, anxiously, momentarily forgetting her anger at him.

"What can I do?" she said.

"Get me down, that's what!" said Scott.

Terry moved under him and tried to support his weight so that she could loosen the loop around his ankles but it was useless. He was too heavy for her, especially hanging upside down the way he was.

Deadweight.

"I'll have to get a knife," she said. "And cut the rope."

"Hurry!" Scott pleaded with her, no longer feeling so cocky.

"Okay," she stepped back and looked at him thoughtfully and waked around him in a slow circle, smiling at his predicament. It served him right.

"I ought to let you hang, you pervert," she said, deciding to rub it in a little.

"Come on, Terri," he pleaded, "Give me a break."

"You gonna cut the crap?"

"Sure, anything. I promise."

She gave him a long look, watched him squirm.

"Okay," she said at last and then she added, with a grin.

"Don't go anywhere."

Scott grimaced wryly. "Very funny."

She grinned at him, enjoying how the tables had been turned, then trotted off back up to the path leading to the cabins, allowing him to squirm a bit was one thing but leaving him hanging for very long would not be safe. The blood would all rush to his head. She ran up the steps to her cabin and opened the door. She hurried over to the closet and pulled down her backpack. She knew she had a Swiss Army knife in there somewhere and started rummaging for it.

Meanwhile, the time seemed to pass with excruciating slowness for Scott. He was beginning to feel a little dizzy. Where the hell was she? She would come back, wouldn't she? Surely she wouldn't just leave him here like this, would she?

The wind picked up a little and he began to turn gently in the breeze. Suddenly, he felt someone grab him by the hair and give a sharp painful yank. Before he could even cry out, the blade of a

machete flashed before him and he felt white heat lance across his throat. Blood spurted from his severed jugular, running down his neck to his chin, trickling across his face into his eyes as he swung gently in the breeze. He tried to scream but his trachea and larynx had been cut clean through. His voice box had been severed and he couldn't make a sound.

Terry came running down the path, coming from her cabin carrying the Swiss Army knife in her right hand. She stopped about a foot a way from where he hung, turned away from her.

"Scott," she said firmly, putting her hands on her hips. "I'm gonna cut you down but if you ever do anything like that again, I'm going to kill you."

There was no response.

"Scott?" she said, uncertainly, wondering if he had fainted. She reached out and turned him around then recoiled, staggering back away from him and screaming as she saw the gaping, grisly wound upon his throat. The vivid streaks of blood running down his face, into his hair and dripping to the ground.

Terry kept screaming uncontrollably. She backed away in horror and then she turned around. A blade slashed in the moonlight and cut off her screams.

Chapter 7

The music in the main house prevented them from hearing Terri’s frenzied screams. They had the stereo turned up and Mark and Jeff sat at the table, locked in an arm-wrestling combat as the girls watched and cheered them on.

"Come on!" said Vicky, sitting close to Mark and urging him on. "Come on, Mark!"

Both boys were grimacing as their arms wavered first one way and then the other but it was clear that Mark was stronger. As Jeff started to weaken, he grunted in exasperation and used his other arm to pull Mark’s arm down. Both boys laughed.

"Cheater!" said Vicky, grinning at him.

"Two out of three?" said Jeff, flexing his fingers.

Sandra saddled up to him and bumped him with her hip.

"Jeff, don’t wear yourself out," she said in a low, husky voice. "You want to wrestle? Come with me."

She pulled him to the couch. Jeff required no coaxing. He sat down and pulled her into his lap. Her arms went around his neck and their lips met in a long, passionate kiss.

Vicky watched them for a moment then leaned close to Mark and spoke in his ear—"You want to take me on?" she said, softly.

Mark wasn’t sure how to respond to her. Just looking at her was enough to make his heart start hammering away inside his chest but he didn’t want to leave himself open to being hurt again. Some girls just flirted with him to be kind. He’d had more than his share of that sort of kindness. He had feelings too and just because he was confined to a wheelchair didn’t mean he couldn’t feel normal male desire.

"Okay, have a seat," he said. He smiled and put his arm up.

"I only want your fingers," Vicky said, her eyes starting deeply into his. He raised his eyebrows.

"What?"

She produced three little electronic games and laid them on the table.

"Take you pick," she said, smiling. "They’re Ted’s. It’s okay with him."

Mark picked up the little boxes one at a time, examining them. Football, hockey, baseball. He glanced at Vicky. What was happening here? he asked himself. Was it only his imagination or was this incredibly gorgeous girl actually coming on to him?

"What’s your pleasure?" He said, trying to keep his voice level.

"The one with the puck, she said, slyly.

Mark cleared his throat. "You mean hockey?"

She stared at him innocently.

"Is that what you call it?"

Mark flushed slightly, not certain if she was flirting with him or teasing him. Jesus, girl… don't do this to me, he thought. Don't rattle my chain. It isn't fair.

"What do we play for?" he asked.

Vicky moved a little closer to him and smiled seductively.

"Position," she said, looking straight into his eyes as they played.

Sandra broke the long kiss with Jeff and slowly got up to her feet. She reached out for Jeff's hand and, smiling, led him up the stairs. Mark and Vicky watched them go and exchanged knowing glances.

"Your turn," Vicky said, handing the computer game to Mark. Their hands touched briefly as she passed the game to him and she felt the electricity in the brief contact.

"Three goals or you're gonna lose," she said, looking directly into his eyes, saying things with her expression that she was not saying with words.

"I've heard that one before," said Mark, taking the game and punching the small buttons. Was it possible that he wasn't just imagining this? He was really getting turned on. He'd been attracted to her from the first moment they met. Could it be that she felt the same way too?

As he played with the computer, Vicky started to roll a joint. She glanced at him, intent on the small screen and, for a moment, she hesitated, not sure how to bring the subject up. Then, she took a deep breath and decided, what the hell. Just come right out with it.

"Mark?" she said, not merely looking at him, making it seem merely a casual question. "What happened that you have to be in a chair?"

"Motorcycle accident. Paralyzed my legs."

Vicky swallowed nervously.

"Is it permanent?"

"Doctors think so." Mark said. "I don't." He glanced at her. "I don't intend to be in this thing the rest of my life," he said firmly.

Vicky pinched the ends of the joint. She touched her tongue to her upper lip. "Just your legs, huh?" she said in an offhand manner. She hesitated, then took the plunge. "Everything else okay?"

Mark understood her meaning.

"Oh, I do alright." He said, trying to keep his voice steady. "One way or another."

She smiled.

"Toke?" she said, holding out the joint.

He shook his head.
"I'm in training, remember?"
"For what?" she said, giving him a level stare.
Upstairs, Jeff lay in bed, tooting his harmonica and watching as Sandra slowly unbuttoned her tight shorts and eased them down over her hips, smiling seductively and maintaining direct eye contact with him all the time. She ran her tongue lightly over her teeth and crawled on top of him, pushing up his shirt and kissing his stomach softly. She slipped his shirt off over his head and put her arms around him, pulling him close as they kissed, their tongues tasting each other. Then, she pulled off her blouse and pressed up against him, lightly running tongue across his parted lips, feeling the moistness between her legs as her nipples grew hard against his bare, smooth chest.
Mark put down the computer game, having failed to score enough goals to beat Vicky. He conceded defeat with a sigh.
"What does the winner get?" said Vicky in a low and husky voice as she looked deep into his eyes.
"What does the winner want?" Mark asked her.
She stared at him, her eyes sending smoldering messages.
"Guess." She said softly, leaning forward and kissing him gently on the lips. Once. Twice. Then slipping her tongue into his mouth. After a moment, she drew back.
"Want to stay together tonight?" she whispered.
"I was just about to ask you," Mark said, huskily.
Vicky smiled.
"My cabin or yours?"
"Ted's in mine," said Mark, thinking that the last thing he needed was to have Ted coming back late and walking in on them. "I don't think that would work out."
Vicky put out the joint.
"We've got the whole camp," she said. "We'll find our own cabin."
She stood up.
"Just give me a few minutes to get a few things, okay."
"Sure," he said, swallowing hard, hardly able to believe that this was really happening to him. She bent down and gave him a quick kiss.
"I'll be right back, she promised in a whisper. She went outside and hurried down the path, back to her cabin humming to herself happily. She had been so afraid that things might not work out between them. That Mark, because of his injuries, might not be able to make love or that he would take her coming on to him as a show of pity or worse still, as some sort of perverse desire on her part to have an unusual sexual experience. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, she was more than a little nervous about spending the night with him. She had never made loved with a handicapped person before. She had no idea what to do. She guessed she'd just have to be on top but beyond that, she really wasn't certain how to go about it. Was there anything she might inadvertently do that could hurt him in any way? She was sure Mark would take charge and tell her what to do. She just didn't want to seem awkward with him. She wanted it to be right between them.

She ran up the stairs to her cabin and went inside. After flicking on the light, she briefly checked herself in the mirror then went over to the dresser and took out a fresh blouse. She slipped out of her halter and into the blouse then rummaged through the drawer in which she kept her panties until she found the ones she was looking for. A pair of sheer black silk bikini panties. She held them up and smiled. She dropped her jeans and stepped out of them, then quickly changed her panties, putting on the black ones that felt so good against her skin. She walked over to the bathroom and took her perfume out of her travel bag. She sprayed a small amount of the perfume onto her wrists, the backs of her ears, the nape of her neck. The cleft between her breasts. And, finally, with a salacious grin, she stuck the bottle inside her panties and gave herself a squirt for good measure.

Leaning over the dresser, closer to the mirror, she turned her head to either side, examining her face. She raked her fingers through her hair, checked the results and made a face. She rummaged in the travel bag once more then looked around on top of the dresser. In the drawers. No luck. She couldn't find her hairbrush in the bathroom either. She tried to think where she might have left it.

Snapping her fingers, she ran out to her car which was parked just outside. She opened the door and stuck her head inside, looking around on the front seats and in the glove compartment. She sighed, getting frustrated and then she thought to look underneath the seat when her fingers closed around the handle of a plastic hairbrush, she withdrew it triumphantly.

"There you are," she said, holding it up.

A rumble of thunder caused her to look up at the sky. Dark clouds were scuttling across the moon. It was about to start pouring. It certainly wouldn't do to go to the trouble of fixing herself up only to have the rain come down as she was on her way back. She'd walk in looking like a wet cat. She'd have to hurry. She hoped Mark wasn't getting too impatient.

Mark sat alone downstairs in the main house, listening to the sounds of Jeff and Sandra making love upstairs. The radio was off and the house was very still. He could hear Sandra giggling upstairs. He smiled. It seemed that everyone was pairing off. Jeff and Sandra, Scott

and Terry, Paul and Ginny, and now, Vicky and himself. Poor Ted. It looked as if he was going to get left out in the cold but maybe he'd find someone in town. Mark certainly hoped so. He knew what it was like to feel lonely.

He wondered what was keeping Vicky. She was probably nervous. He hoped she hadn't gotten cold feet and changed her mind. It wasn't easy trying to get a girl to like you when you were stuck in a wheelchair. Sometimes, it wasn't easy getting people to respond to you at all. They were either too responsive, Mark thought, going out of their way to be helpful and often interfering in the process or they simply treated you like some sort of helpless infant who could not fend for himself. And there were some people who were so disturbed by the idea of someone who was handicapped that they acted as if they didn't even see you. He didn't know what was worse: being pitied and condescended to or being ignored. Vicky wasn't like that.

At first, she thought she might be one of those girls with a really strong maternal instinct—someone who saw him as an object of pity and wanted to mother him. But he had clearly misjudged her. She had offered to push his chair just once and when he had insisted on doing it himself, she had backed off immediately. In fact, he realized that he had unintentionally hurt her feelings. He had seen the expression on her face out of the corner of his eye and he had winced inwardly at his own insensitivity. There had been no need for him to be so abrupt with her. He could have thanked her for her well meaning intentions. He could have smiled but she had realized instinctively that he was touchy about accepting help from other people and she had not held it against him. Instead, she had gone out of her way to try to get to know him.

When she looked at him, she didn't see a wheelchair. She saw a guy who just happened to be in one.

He heard what sounded like a footstep on the porch stairs and he swiveled his chair around.

"Vicky?" he said, anxiously. He hoped it wasn't the others coming back. He didn't want anything to spoil it. He wheeled himself over to the front door. It sounded as if someone was standing out there, not certain about coming in.

"Vicky? Is that you?" he said. He reached out and opened the door, shoved it hard and rolled his chair out onto the front porch. He looked around. There didn't appear to be anybody there. It was dark and the black clouds rolled across the full moon. The wind was getting stronger.

Thunder rumbled in the distance, lightning flashed upon the bright steel blade as it swished through the air and thudded into Mark's face, slicing through flesh and crunching through bone in one unbelievably powerful stroke. Mark never knew what hit him. He never

even had a chance to cry out.

He was already dead as the wheelchair rolled backward from the impact of the savage blow, tilting and then crashing down the stairs. His body lay completely still in a tangled heap at the foot of the porch steps and then it was slowly dragged away, leaving behind a smeared trail of blood, unnoticeable in the darkness.

The slow tread of the heavy work boots made the porch steps creak ominously as he climbed them, but the sound of the whistling wind and the rolling thunder grounded out his approach. He reached for the doorknob and turned it slowly. Lightning flashed as it opened soundlessly, casting his giant shadow on the door and letting a brief gust of wind come into the living room before the door swung shut behind him. He looked around; the dying embers of a fire were glowing in the hearth. A few empty beer bottles and a bowl of popcorn were on the table along with several computer games. A girl's embroidered denim jacket was laying on the couch. A chessboard was laid out on the coffee table. The pieces still left in the same position as they'd been at the conclusion of the last game. A crude Indian-style wooden spear, tipped with iron, was leaning against the wall over by the stairs, a grotesque rubber monster mask hanging from it.

He crossed the room and reached out for the rubber mask which he removed from the spear and dropped onto the floor. He picked up the spear and felt its heft. It felt strong. The point, hand chiseled from a stone, and shaped like a large arrowhead was firmly lashed to the wooden shaft. It would not break loose. He closed his fingers around the long shaft of the spear, almost caressing it.

The sound of muffled laughter followed by a high-pitched squeal of delight came from the second floor. He turned and, with a grim purpose, started slowly climbing up the stairs.

Halfway up, one of the steps creaked loudly and he paused, hesitating, listening intently but the sounds of lovemaking continued uninterrupted and he resumed his climb, holding the spear before him. The roaring in his ears sounded like a cataract as if a huge wall of water were tumbling down from a great height and crashing down upon a pile of jagged rocks below.

He could not block out the sound no matter what he did. There was no escaping it. He could hammer his head against a tree until it bled. He could pound his fists against the ground until the skin broke and his knuckle bones protruded as if he could spatter the very earth into submission. He could run blindly through the forest, tripping over roots, crashing through the underbrush. His hand clamped over his ears in a futile effort to shut out the sound. Al to no avail. No matter what he did, the roaring sound would threaten to engulf him and there was only one thing that could make it go away—blood.

Over the horrific pounding in his ears, the tidal waves of noise that slammed away at him relentlessly, a disembodied voice seemed to float up from the depths of his subconscious. A voice that he remembered only very dimly. It was the voice that had spoken to him while he lay in a wooden crib. It was the only voice that had ever spoken to him kindly. His mother's voice.

"Kill them, Jason…" It commanded him.

"Kill them… Kill them all…"

He knew them. He knew them all. He knew they were to blame for what had happened to his mother. He knew that the only way he could make the relentless pounding in his head diminish was to sacrifice their lives to the dark forces that threaten to consume him. He moved closer to the door that stood ajar. The door to the bedroom where Jeff and Sandra were making love, oblivious to the horror that approached them.

She lay beneath him, her arms clasped tightly around his shoulders, feeling the strong muscles in his back as he drove himself deep inside her, pulling his hips back and driving them forward rhythmically, filling her with a warm liquid heat that pulsed through her in waves.

Sandra felt his hot breath against her neck. She felt Jeff's lips brushing against her throat. The tip of his tongue flicking at her earlobe and her unfocused stare took in a diffused image of the curly blond locks of his hair that brushed against her face as she hugged him close, making him a part of her.

She felt the tremors start from way down in the tips of her toes, building in waves to a feeling that engulfed her, sending her entire body into paroxysms of ecstasy as she felt the heat of passion washing over her. She hugged Jeff to her with all her might, trying to force him into her more deeply and then the shadow crossed her face and her gaze focused on the figure standing over them.

The horrifying hooded apparition that held the spear aloft. The burning hate filled eyes that bored directly into hers. She opened her mouth to scream and then the spear plunged down, plowing through Jeff's back so hard that she felt the brutal impact as the spear penetrated clean through him then into her own flesh. She heard the hiss of air rushing from Jeff's lungs. She saw the shocked, disbelieving expression on his face. She felt the spray of blood that came out of his mouth and struck her cheek. She felt the searing heat of the spear's iron point tearing through her flesh, plunging through her body and emerging out the other side. It was driven through them both with such incredible force that it continued on through the mattress of the bed and became embedded in the floor.

Sandra did not die right away. She withered in unendurable

agony, transfixed by the spear which united her with Jeff forever in a passionate embrace of death. Blood bubbled up from her lungs and frothed upon her lips. She tried to scream but found herself choking on her own life fluids. She saw Jeff's sightless eyes like frozen marbles gazing down at her in a glazed stare and the last image that registered on her conscious mind was the terrifying sight of Jason Voorhees standing over them, clenching and unclenching his fists, staring down at them with utter loathing.

She wiggled like a fish impaled on a hook, feeling her life ebbing with every blood froth breath she took. She wanted to scream out loud in protest that this could not possibly be happening to her. That she was too young to die. That she had a right to live but death cared about neither age nor rights.

And in a moment, it was all over for her as darkness closed in upon her and she moved no more.

Chapter 8

The bar was a lot louder—a lot smokier—and a lot more crowded as the hour grew late and the people who had already seen the one movie playing in the town drifted into take advantage of the only other entertainment Crystal Lake had to offer. The band was cranking up, feeding off the energy of the crowd and the lead singer had gotten drunk enough to lay into some Bob Seger with at least a slight degree of authenticity.

Ted's collection of empty beer bottles had grown to about a dozen and even with his dragster like metabolism, he was starting to feel seriously buzzed. He had eaten some pizza earlier to cut the booze but every drink order was just another excuse to talk to the lovely Maggie with her jet-black hair, hazel eyes, beautiful long legs, and the blouse that seemed somehow to have come a little more unbuttoned since the last time he had looked at it, which had not been very long ago at all.

He wondered if he could possibly be imagining it. He had been flirting with the girl all evening, trying to get up enough nerve to make a move and hoping that he wasn't sounding like a nerd. When all the time, she'd been flirting right back, and he'd been so preoccupied with trying not to look bad that he'd hardly even noticed.

Maggie was starting to get a bit concerned that he'd never get his act together. She figured that after a few drinks, he'd overcome his shyness and stop with the silly jokes, but he just kept putting them away and acting like an awkward little boy, not being obnoxious—just silly. Everything she'd done to try to let him know that she was interested had gone right past him. She felt exasperated. She was getting tired of winking at him. She felt as if her eye was twitching and she had already unbuttoned the top three buttons on her blouse. If she got any more obvious than that, she'd fall right out.

She'd wished to hell he'd stop playing around and come right out and ask her if she was doing anything after she got off work, which would be in about another half an hour. She could tell that he was nervous but for god's sake, how thick could a guy be? She'd been sending him signals all night long and he still hadn't picked any of them up. Or if he had, he was too uptight to act on them. Still, it was kind of sweet to see a guy who was so obviously not slick. She was really tired of guys who tried to come on cool and macho. Just about every guy in town had tried to put the make on her and here was this cute boy, sort of sitting there and goofing around with her, almost as if he was shuffling his feet in the dirt and saying "oh gosh, shucks." She could hardly believe he was for real. She wanted to wrap him up and take him home and eat him.

Paul tipped back his beer bottle and chugged what was left of the brew. He set the bottle down inside.

"I've got to get some sleep," he said, knowing that he'd reached his limit.

Ginny gave him a knowing look.

"I'm tired," she said, with an exaggerated yawn.

"Quittin' already?" Ted asked, dreading the moment of truth now that it had arrived. He glanced at Maggie, wiping down the bar just a couple of feet away. She smiled at him. There was no more putting it off. Somehow, he had to get his courage up and ask her. It had to be now or never.

"Ted," said Paul, astonished at his capacity.

"You'd have me out till breakfast if I let you," Ginny stretched, allowing her hand to gently graze Paul's thigh as it came down.

"I'll ride back with you, okay?" she said, hoping that Ted would get the message. Come on, boy, she thought. The girl obviously likes you and we're getting the hell out of your way. Get on with it!

Paul gave her a look as he felt her fingers trail over his thigh, perilously close to his groin. He started to gather up his money except for the tip he was leaving on the bar. Maggie came over to take away their bottles and wished them a good night.

"When the place closes, you come back to camp, got it?" said Paul with a big wink at Ted.

"Yes Boss."

Paul glanced pointedly at Maggie, then he reached into the pocket of Ted's jacket and removed the keys to Jeff's truck as Ted watched, dumbfounded, he handed the keys to Maggie.

"And let Maggie drive the pickup," winking at her and handing her the keys. Then he turned and walked away with Ginny on his arm.

Ted stared after him, open mouthed, then glanced back at Maggie as she smiled and twirled the truck keys. Ted smiled awkwardly.

"Excuse me," he said to her, "Are there any after-hours places around here?"

"Sure," she said, smiling, and holding his gaze as she put the keys away inside her pocket.

"My place."

Ginny gave Paul a nudge as they walked out the front door of the bar.

"You're so bad," she said.

"No, I'm not. Ted is." Paul said. "I was beginning to think that Maggie would have to rip her blouse open and hold up a sign before he got the message."

Ginny giggled.

"You think he'll be coming back tonight?" she asked.

"I don't think so," said Paul, grinning. "Maggie has the keys."

He glanced up at the sky. The rain was starting to come down pretty hard.

"Okay," he said, turning the collar of his jacket up. "Let's make a run for it."

"I'm going, I'm going," said Ginny, hooking her arm through his and running for the parking lot with her jacket up over her head. They made it to the Volkswagen just as the rain started to come down in buckets. They rolled up all the windows and Paul grimaced at the trickle of water that immediately stated to come in through the roof just above his head.

"This thing had better start," he said, shoving the key into the ignition.

"You fixed it," Ginny reminded him.

"I know. That's what worries me," he said. He turned the key. The starter motor whined in protest several times. There was frightful clunk and then the engine coughed, backfired like a bazooka and caught, settling into a chugging idle that sounded like a dying motorcycle running on one cylinder.

Paul glanced at Ginny dubiously. She shrugged with a sign of resignation. He shifted into first and let out the clutch, half expecting the little car to shudder and expire on the spot.

Instead, it leapt out of its parking space as if it had been goosed, laying a patch of rubber on the asphalt as it chirped its tires.

Nice clutch, thought Paul as he shifted into second gear and the VW lurched once more.

At this rate, he thought, we might not make it through the night.

Vicky was running from her cabin toward the main house when the rain started. She made it up the steps of the front porch just as the sky seemed to open up.

Well, so much for primping, she thought. They were both going to get soaked now. She opened the door and came into the living room, shaking out her hair and looking around. There wasn't anyone in sight.

"Mark?" She said. She frowned and walked through the front room and into the kitchen. There was no sign of him.

"Mark?" she said, "Where are you?"

Returning to the front room, she wondered where he could have disappeared to. Surely, he couldn't gone up the stairs. Not in that wheelchair.

She glanced up the darkened stairs, not hearing anything, wondering if Sandra and Jeff knew where he was unless they'd left or fallen asleep up there. She smiled, judging by the energetic sounds

they had made earlier, they were probably dead by now.

"Anybody still here?" she called hesitantly.

"Sandra? Jeff?"

She started up the stairs.

"Sandra?" she said, not really wanting to walk in on them but worried about Mark. The thunder crashed and lightning briefly illuminated the dark stairwell as she walked softly toward the bedroom door. She knocked twice, waited a moment and then knocked once more. There was no answer.

There were no sounds coming from inside. She turned the knob and opened the door a crack.

"Sandra?" she whispered, peeking inside. The sheets were pulled over two forms huddled together on the bed. She could see Sandra's hair spilling out over the pillow. Vicky pushed the door open and went inside. She tiptoed over to the bed, thinking perhaps she could just wake Sandra up and not disturb Jeff. She was starting to get really worried about Mark. He was nowhere in the house and it was raining cats and dogs outside.

"Sandra?" she whispered, reaching out to touch the sheet shrouded form.

The sheets were suddenly thrown back and Jason Voorhees sat up in the bed where he had been lying next to Sandra's dead, blood-spattered body. Vicky screamed as she beheld those two burning eyes gazing out at her from behind the dirty hood. A knife flashed and she felt as if a red-hot wire had been pulled across her skin. She looked down in horror at the blood bubbling up out of the deep slash in her leg, at the raw flesh laid open by the blade. She backed away, limping, in shock, and still not fully feeling the pain. She stumbled against the door and recoiled from the sight of Jeff's nude body impaled on a coat hook in the wall. Dark blood coagulating on his stomach.

She screamed again as Jason stabbed her in the chest. The blade piercing her skin and skipping off the bone. Jason plunged in deeply then withdrew it and slammed it into her again with piledriver force. She stopped screaming as a brilliant white-hot light blotted out her sight and she sank down into the darkness. He watched her while the life trickled out of her and for a while, a very brief while, the raging fever in him subsided. He was doing what he had to do. He was doing it all for her.

Now, he had to take them back and show her.

He bent down, lifted Vicky by her arms and dragged her limp corpse across the floor and down the stairs. Her trailing feet thumping on the steps. He would bring her down stairs first and then he would get the others. All of them. To show her how well he was carrying out

her wishes. He would carry them all out to the cabin in the woods and bring them one a time into the back room. Her room.

He would take them back to Mother.

Chapter 9

The rain was coming down in sheets as Paul hunched over the steering wheel, squinting through the windshield. The VW seemed to hit every single pothole in the road and the suspension was on the verge of quitting altogether. Since the drainage on the dirt roads left a great deal to be desired, the roads were quickly turning into mud. What they really needed in this weather, Paul felt, was a 4x4 like Jeff's, not a rattle-trap Volkswagen bug, patched together with pop rivets and body putty.

Volkswagen hadn't made the damn things since 1979 but there were still about a trillion of them on the road and all of a sudden, they had become "in" again, especially among the college crowd. Pal had never really given them a fair chance, choosing instead to contrast them with flashier, sportier cars.

On the plus side, however, they were cheap, had reasonable traction in the snow, and just about anybody could work on one. This was clearly one of the attractive features for those who were less mechanically inclined. Oh yes, and they were cute which was probably the main reason behind their resurgence as fashionable transportation. The trouble was, there were a lot of people out there who were buying up old wrecks—cars that had been banged up or totaled or had rusted through and they were grinding away the rusted pieces, often leaving gaping holes in the bodywork and floor which they covered up with pieces of sheet metal, pop riveted into place. Then they hammered out the dents as best they could, slapped a thick coat of body putty over the whole thing, sanded it and painted it some bright and cheery color. Maybe put some rally stripes on the darn thing and then they could sell it to some unsuspecting high school or college kid for at least one or two thousand dollars.

It was a real rip-off. VW Bugs weren't the only cars they did this with but because the bugs were cheap and fairly plentiful, they were the most cost effective to "recondition." In some cases, this "reconditioning" was actually accomplished by taking one car that had been smashed up so badly in the rear that even the frame had cracked, literally sawing it in half and welding it to another half a car that had been totaled from the front.

Paul was starting to get an uncomfortable feeling hat Ginny's bright red bug might have been one of those. Maybe it was bright and shiny on the outside, but on the inside, it was a real old lady. As it jounced along the rutted muddy road, it felt as if it was about to split in half. On top of that, his shirt was soaked from the steady trickle of water leaking through the roof.

Now, he knew why Ginny had decided to let him drive. So she

could sit where it was dry. He swore under his breath as the car swerved, sliding in the mud as he turned it into the dirt road leading down to the counselor training center. It bounced over the ruts as if it were a pogo stick and came to a wheezing halt in front of the main house about fifteen feet from the porch.

"Nice night," said Ginny with a grimace.

"Yeah, for a duck," Paul said. He stared out the windshield at the main house, frowning.

"What the hell are the lights on for?" he said.

They ran out of the car and up the porch steps. The front door was wide open, banging in the wind.

"Paul?" said Ginny, shaking her head. "They wouldn’t leave the place like this."

She gave him a worried look.

"Think something’s wrong?"

Without waiting for an answer, she hurried toward the stairs.

"I’ll check upstairs."

Paul looked around the room. Everything seemed just as they had left it except for one small thing.

He picked up a roach from the ashtray on the table and smelled it.

"These kids smoke better dope than I do," he said, dropping the roach back in the ash tray. He felt a little easier. They had probably all gotten wasted and crashed, forgetting to turn out the lights.

Suddenly, he was jolted out of it by the sound of Ginny’s frightened voice calling him from upstairs.

"Paul!"

She sounded scared as she called his name again. He raced up the stairs to the bedroom. Ginny was standing over the bed, an expression of utter dread frozen on her face. She pointed down at the rumpled sheets pulled back to show a large puddle of blood soaking into the mattress and dripping down onto the floor beneath the bed. More blood was streaked across the floor and there was some splattered on the wall.

"Is this some kind of joke?" said Paul, thinking that it had to be. The kids were just screwing around, playing a prank on them to get even with that bit he had pulled at the campfire. It had to be red paint that they were looking at, he thought. It simply had to be. It couldn’t possibly be what he was afraid it was.

"They wouldn’t do anything like this," said Ginny, shaking her head. Her voice trembled slightly as she clutched at this arm. As if on cue, a brilliant bolt of lightning illuminated the entire room, lighting up their faces and a moment later, they heard the deafening clap of thunder that shook the rafters of the house. The lights flickered and

went out.

"Ginny, come on," said Paul, heading back downstairs.

"What for me!" she said, hurrying after him, unwilling to be left alone even for one second. She didn't know what the hell was going on, but she had a terrible suspicion that this was not a joke.

Whatever it was, it was really happening. It wasn't like sitting in a movie and getting caught up in the story knowing you'd be safe when the credits rolled, and the lights came back on. There was no way out of this. She was actually trapped in this horrifying plot.

Paul reached into his pocket and pulled out a small pen light. He snapped it on as they went down the stairs.

Trust my boy scout to always be prepared, thought Ginny. She used to tease him about all the things he carried in his pockets like a six-year-old boy bearing all his treasures with him all the time. The red Victorinox Swiss Army Knife which he was never without, the spark plug gapper on his keychain, the watch that told both ordinary and military time as well as giving the day and date and monitoring his pulse rate, the compass, the tiny pen light.

Well, she had to hand it to him. When you needed something like that, you really needed it and Paul was ready. The beam of the tiny light was barely enough to see by but it sure as hell beat not having any lights at all. They went downstairs and Paul glanced into the kitchen.

"Lights are all out there too. Must be the main fuse again."

"Paul? What's going on?" she said. She was really scared now. This wasn't funny. Nobody was around.

"It's nothing," Paul said, trying hard to sound as if he really believed that."

"Where IS everybody?"

He rummaged through the kitchen drawers, looking for a spare box of fuses, cursing himself for not having spent the extra money to go with circuit breakers. Of course, now that he needed them, there were no extra fuses to be found.

"I don't know," he said, answering her question perhaps a bit too briskly. He didn't know what the hell was going on either and it was really getting on his nerves.

"If this was some sort of sick joke on the part of the others, they were sure as hell going to be awful goddammed sorry in the morning. He slammed the drawer shut, disgusted at not being able to find any spare fuses. Now they were stuck in the dark and it was his own damn fault. He should have double checked the supply list more carefully. Well, enough was enough. The joke had worn real thin. He figured the other kids were all hiding in one of the other cabins, laughing their asses off.

They'd be laughing out of their sides of their faces by the time he got through with them.

He glanced out through the kitchen window.

"Rain's stopping. We'll go looking for them," he said grimly. He flashed the beam around, scowling that it was so weak. He'd have to make a point of picking up a more powerful pocket light at some point.

He stopped, taking a deep breath as Ginny knocked right into him. He counted 10, telling himself it's all right. Don't get bent out of shape about it. The lights are out and everyone seems to have disappeared. She's scared. Hell. You're a little scared yourself. Don't go snapping at her. That really isn't what we need right now.

"Paul?" she said, suddenly. Her voice full of hysteria. Her fingernails digging into his upper arm hard enough to draw blood. "There's someone in this room."

Oh for God's sake, he thought as he swept the beam of his pen light around the room, seeing absolutely nothing.

That's all I need, Ginny, he thought, Will you please not lose it on me just 'cause the Goddamn lights went out.

And then, he saw a shadow dart across the room. He heard the heavy labored breathing. It was absolutely unmistakable. There WAS someone in the room with them.

Chapter 10

"Paul! There’s someone in this fucking room!" Ginny screamed.

Paul swung the light around just as Jason charged him. He briefly saw the image of a large shadowy hooded figure bearing down upon him. Something long and sharp and pointed held before it. He sidestepped. The savage lunge, just in time. He felt the spear graze his side and become embedded in the wall behind him, splintering from the sheer power of the muscular arms that drove it at him, missing him by a hair.

He heard the wooden shaft break with a sharp snap as it struck the wall behind him. He felt the heavy body brush past him, heard the deep animalistic breathing, smelled the stench of blood mixed with powerful, acrid body odor. The penlight sailed away across the room as Paul grappled with the figure, feeling the incredible power in those massive arms that encircled him in a crushing bear-hug, forcing him down onto the floor. He felt the hot, heavy stinking breath against his face as the hooded figure came up against him, forcing him to the floor, seeking to squeeze the very life out of him.

Arms flailed. There was the sound of groans and grunts as they rolled across the floor. Each trying to gain the upper hand.

Paul, feeling the clearly superior strength of the creature he was fighting, yet drawing upon all of the reserves of his willpower, intent upon battering the crazed beast he was fighting into submission, determined not to lose. Ginny backed away against a wall, stifling a scream that threatened to break lose from her throat and never stop. She felt utterly helpless as she watched the two shadowy figures pound each other with a fierce relentless savagery. She watched them as they rolled across the floor, crashing into furniture, overturning chairs, and tables. She could hear the dull sounds of fists slamming into flesh and then suddenly, there was only silence. It was a silence more terrifying than any sound she had ever heard before. The sound of a brutal struggle of life and death suddenly gave way to utter quiet. A quiet that made her blood run cold.

She stood, pressed up against the wall, holding her breath. Her mouth completely dry. She was afraid to make the slightest sound, terrified of uttering the faintest whisper. Yet, at the same time, it was as if a fist had plunged into her stomach to find her inner self and squeeze with a relentless fury.

She had to know the adrenaline coursed through her veins, pounding through her blood vessels like a freight train running out of control. Her eyes were riveted upon the spot where she had last seen the shadowy shapes tumbling over each other, locked in a life-or-death struggle for survival.

"Paul?" she whispered hoarsely. She saw the silhouette of a figure rising up off the floor and she held her breath as she squinted into the darkness.

Paul? Is that you? Please… she thought fervently. Oh please, oh God, Paul… let it be you…

"Paul?"

The shadowy figure stumbled toward her. She could hear the deep gasps of breath as if a drowning person were trying to gulp air into his lungs.

"Paul?"

She backed up until she felt the wall behind her.

"Answer me!" she shouted.

The hooded figure of Jason Voorhees suddenly loomed before her. She saw the blazing eyes staring at her hatefully through the eyeholes cut into the hood he wore over his head. She saw the bloody hand reaching out for her. She screamed and ran, plunging through the door and running down the narrow corridor, into the bathroom, slamming the door behind her and locking it, holding her hand on the knob, resting the weight of her body against the door. She tried to catch her breath. She tried to think. She had to get out of there somehow. She had to escape. He would be there in a moment.

The bathroom window!

Holding her breath, she edged away from the door, half expecting to see him crashing through it at any moment. When she reached for bathroom window to open it, the window erupted inwards in a spray of shattered glass as Jason smashed through it from the outside. His arm reached and tried to grab her.

Ginny screamed and bolted through the bathroom door, running back down the hall into the kitchen.

She slammed the door shut behind her and crouched against it, bringing her fist up to her mouth and biting down upon it in an effort to choke off the screams that threatened to erupt from her throat.

She pressed her ear against the door, listening. There was no sound of pursuing footsteps. Trying to control the furious pounding of her heart, Ginny got to her feet. Her eyes darting all around her, desperately seeking a weapon with which to protect herself.

She spotted the rack of carving knives mounted on the wall. She grabbed the biggest one and held it tightly in her hand. Her eyes starting wildly at the door. She saw the doorknob turn slowly and then the entire door shook as he tried to force the lock. The door stopped shaking and for a moment, it seemed as if he had given up. And then, the door splintered as the pointed black tines of an iron pitchfork were driven through it.

Ginny screamed and ran across the room, seeking an escape.

She pulled open the first door that she came to, but it was a closet and she screamed hysterically as the stiff blood-spattered body of Crazy Ralph came tumbling out, its dead weight dropping directly on top of her. She recoiled from the corpse in horror, pushing it away frantically. The kitchen door was being methodically hacked to pieces by repeated blows from the heavy pitchfork.

She climbed up onto the sink and struggled to raise the window over it. It was stuck. With an effort borne of sheer desperation, she forced the window up then tumbled through it onto the muddy ground below. She rolled as she hit the ground and came up running. Dashing directly toward her VW Bug.

She threw open the door and jumped into the driver's seat, slapping the door locks down and pawing madly through her pockets for the key. She found it and thrust it into the ignition switch. The starter made stubborn grinding sounds as she turned her key and pumped the accelerator. The engine would not turn over. She tried again with no result. The starter motor kept whining uncooperatively.

"Oh, come on! Come on! Come on!" she pleaded. All to no avail.

Suddenly, Jason's hooded head popped up into view, inches away from the wide window. She screamed and scrambled away from the fearsome apparition, but when she looked again, he was gone.

For a moment, she sat motionless, holding her breath and then she screamed once more as the black tines of the pitchfork ripped through the convertible roof, cutting a huge gash in it.

"Oh my God!" she cried as Jason's arm reached in, groping for her. She unlocked the door and kicked it open with all her might. The door struck Jason and knocked him off his feet. As he fell, Ginny burst out of the car on the opposite side and ran for all she was worth. She ran up the hill toward the other cabins, then she paused as she reached a thick stand of bushes. She could hear him running after her, his heavy footsteps squelching in the mud behind her. She hid behind the bushes, biting her lip and waiting.

As he came around, she lunged out suddenly and drove her foot into his groin with all her might. He crumpled to the ground as she ran back toward the cabins, heading for Vicky's yellow car. She tried the doors. They were locked. When she heard him coming, she ducked in front of the car, huddling close to its front grill as he came around behind it with the pitchfork in his hand. She waited until he had moved on, then she took off at a dead run, sobbing for breath as she headed for her cabin.

She had to get out of this somehow. She had to. She couldn't let it all end here.

Suddenly, he came crashing through the underbrush at the

side of the trail, lunging at her. She barely twisted away from him with a terrified cry and continued running up the path. She plunged through the door of her cabin, not really knowing where she was going but merely fleeing from his relentless pursuit as she heard his heavy footsteps coming up the path. She scrambled underneath her bed, curling herself up into a tiny ball and holding her breath as the door swung open with a squeak and he came into the cabin.

When she saw his heavy black mud encrusted boots approach the bed and pause. She bit her lower lip, afraid to make the slightest sound. The floorboard creaked as he moved closer, seeking her. She saw him go over to the storage closet and fling the door open, looking for her. Then, he flung a chair away from him with frustration.

Suddenly, she sensed another presence under the bed with her and bit her tongue to keep from screaming as a huge rat scuttled past her face. She cringed as the rodent stopped within inches of her. Its whiskers twitching, its feral mouth working, its nose sniffing at her. In utter horror and revulsion, Ginny drew her knees up beneath her and choked back a moan as her bladder released a hot stream of urine.

Jason paused on his way back out the door, noticing the trickle of liquid coming from underneath the bed. Ginny peered out from her hiding place. There was no sign of Jason's heavy boots. Could he have left?

Slowly, tentatively, she ventured out, looking all around her. She heard a creak and glanced up to see Jason standing above her on a chair, his pitchfork poised to strike. Her eyes went wide and she screamed. Recoiling instinctively, saved only by the flimsy wooden chair breaking under Jason's weight at the last moment, it collapsed beneath him, sending him crashing to the floor. The pitchfork splintered and broke in half as he fell.

Suddenly, remembering what she had hidden in the storage closet of her cabin, Ginny threw the door open and reached for the chainsaw that she had left there earlier. She flicked on the switch and gave the starter cord a furious yank, almost crying when the chainsaw started on the first pull. She brought it around just barely in time as Jason lunged at her. The whirring blades missed his hooded face by inches and he recoiled, retreating before the swiftly whirring teeth as Ginny came at him, brandishing her weapon. He threw up his arm to protect himself and the saw bit into it, chewing through the flesh and biting into bone where it got stuck and caused the motor to stall as Jason struck out with his other arm to knock the saw away. He doubled over and covered himself up. Ginny picked up a wooden chair and brought it down upon him with all her might. Jason fell and lay still as it broke over his head. She turned and ran, only wanting to put as much distance between herself and the psychopathic killer as possible.

She had never been so scared in her entire life.

My God, she thought, it was all true. The legend had been real all along. He must have been living out here in the woods all these years like the story claimed and when Paul came back here to open up his training center, that was what had set him off.

Paul, she clutched at her stomach as she staggered down the trail toward the woods. Oh God, she thought, Paul… he's dead. They must all be dead. She must be the only one who had made it out alive.

And then, she suddenly remembered… Ted! If he had clicked with Maggie and gone to spend the night with her, then he would probably be all right. But if he came to the training center late, there was a good chance that he would run right into Jason. He might be coming back even at this very moment, her car was dead. There was no way to go except on foot.

She decided to cut through the woods and head for the country road leading into town. If Ted was coming back, she'd recognize Jeff's pickup and try to head him off. Otherwise, she'd go straight to the police and tell them what had happened. She stumbled down the forest trail, gasping for breath, trying to will her pounding heart to slow down. She reached a small stream and sat down on the bank for a moment, trying to catch her breath. Her head was swimming. She was having trouble thinking clearly, which was not unusual under the circumstances. She was in a daze, half in shock from her terrifying experience.

Think, she told herself, digging her fingernails into her palms, trying to use the pain to snap herself out of her shock. Get yourself together. Figure out where you are. As near as she could remember, the country road leading to town was in a northerly direction which meant she had to cross the stream and keep going straight until she hit it.

She splashed across the stream and pushed through a break in the thicket. On the other side, she came through into a small clearing with the dark silhouette of a wooden cabin about fifty feet away on the other side. She could see a candle burning in the window. Without realizing where she was, she ran toward the cabin, thinking that whoever was inside could help her.

"Help me!" she cried. "Please, help me!"

She burst into the cabin. The place was incredibly filthy and the smell that assaulted her was horrifying. It was a smell unlike anything she'd ever encountered before. She gagged, holding her mouth against the unbelievable stench. Who could possibly live in such a place?

The roof was falling in. The glass in the windows was cracked and broken. The pantry doors had all fallen off their hinges. Garbage

was strewn all over the place and the smell of feces was overpowering. The moist, pungent odor of rot permeated the room and yet there was another smell even more horrendous. A sickly, sour sweet smell that was enough to bring tears to her eyes. The odor of decomposition and decay. With a sinking feeling, she suddenly realized where she was. She was standing in the ruins of one of the old cabins of Crystal Lake. She had found Camp Blood.

This had to be the place where Jason had taken refuge. The place where he'd been hiding all these years. Her worst suspicious were confirmed when she glanced out through the broken window and saw the hooded figure of Jason Voorhees come running down the trail, following her like a relentless juggernaut. She cried out and slammed the door shut, bolding it. There was no escape.

She ran for the back room as she hard the weight of his body slam against the front door, making it shudder on its ancient hinges. She knew it would not keep him out for long. She burst into the back room and slammed the door shut behind her, jamming the bolt in place and then she suddenly became aware of a flickering light behind her and the overpowering smell. She turned around, her jaw dropped and her eyes went wide with horror. She shoved her fist into her mouth to shut off the screams that started to spill out of her and she bit down on her knuckles hard enough to draw blood.

In the center of the room was a crudely constructed wooden altar made from a table covered with a filthy canvas drop cloth. Insects scurried across the canvas, crawling over the surface of the table, surrounded by flickering candles like votive offerings in a church was the rotting, worm eaten, decapitated head of Pamela Voorhees. And laid out on the table in front of the grisly head was a filthy moth eaten sweater, a dirty old pair of dark woolen trousers and an eight inch hunting knife in a soiled leather sheath and a blood caked machete. Piled on the floor, all around the altar, were the blood soaked bodies of the slain counselors as well as the corpse of deputy-sheriff Winslow and the long decayed remains of Alice who had been the lone survivor of the massacre at Camp Crystal Lake.

Jason had taken his vengeance upon them all. He had brought them home to Mother.

Ginny heard the outside door splinter and give way. Then she heard the heavy tread of boots outside the door to the back room. There was nowhere left to run.

She looked all around her desperately, but it was hopeless. There was no escape. Clenching her fists and hyperventilating, trying to keep from completely succumbing to hysterics, Ginny tried to force herself to ignore the horror that confronted her to think of some way out of this terrifying predicament. She could not accept that her death

was inevitable. She could not give up. There had to be something she could do.

The door to the back room shuddered as something hard struck it with a powerful blow and Ginny recoiled as the tip of a pickaxe came crashing through the wood.

"Oh, no! No! No!" She whimpered as the axe head was worked back and forth, freed from the wood and drawn back to smash into the door again. She sank down to her knees, fighting back the tears, struggling to keep the screams bottled up because she knew that the moment she gave way to panic, it would all be over.

The pickaxe crashed into the door again, splintering it still further. In a moment, he'd be through and he would tear her to pieces for profaning the shrine he had consecrated with blood to his mother.

She glanced at the hideous, decomposing head of Pamela Voorhees and a desperate idea came to her. As Jason pounded at the door with a pickaxe, breaking his way through, Ginny reached out to the altar and picked up the stinking, filthy sweater.

Overcoming her revolution, she quickly pulled it on over her head, trying not to think about the insects crawling over the table where it had lain. Then, she crouched down, kneeling in front of the rotting head of Jason's mother, trying not to gag on the stench of decomposing flesh as she tucked her hair down underneath the sweater, arranging it in a rough approximation of the tattered wisps of hair upon the grisly head. She almost fainted when a huge blood engorged worm slithered out of the head's open mouth but she managed to fight down the panic as she smeared dirt upon her features and prayed the ruse would work.

It was a wild gamble, a desperate last-ditch attempt to survive but she had no other options. She would assume the role of Jason's mother and pray that with her college psychology, she could manipulate him into buying it. It was her only chance.

She reached for the machete lying on the table. The door burst in as Jason broke through, shouldering the debris aside and holding the pickaxe aloft, ready to strike. He saw her and hesitated for a moment, a look of confusion in his eyes.

"Jason," Ginny said quickly, leaning toward him slightly. "It's done, Jason. You've done your job well and Mommy is pleased."

He started to lower the pickaxe.

"That's a good boy," Ginny said, soothingly. "Come to Mommy."

She held the machete out of sight behind her back. She tried to keep her voice from trembling as she spoke.

"Come on," she said, as he took one shuffling step toward her, cocking his head uncertainly.

"Come on. Mommy has a reward for you."

He stopped, looking doubtful and started to lift the axe once more.

Ginny swallowed hard, trying to keep her nerves steady.

"Jason! Mother is talking to you!" she said, raising her voice as if she were chiding a misbehaving boy. He paused hesitantly, lowering the axe once more.

"Come on," she said, "That's my boy. Kneel down. Mother has something for you."

He started to go down to his knees.

"That's it… kneel down…" she said, watching him intently as he knelt before her. The axe held loosely before him.

"That's right," she said, slowly lifting the machete with both hands. "Kneel down."

But as she twisted slightly, raising the machete, Jason caught a glimpse of his mother's head behind her and his eyes blazed up at her with fury as she brought the machete down in a fast swing. But it wasn't fast enough. He parried it with the axe head and the shock of the impact caused her to let go.

The machete clattered to the floor. He swung the pickaxe and Ginny cried out with agony as the blade caught her in the leg, making a deep gash.

"Ginny!" Paul shouted, bursting into the room, bruised and bleeding. He threw himself at Jason and the two of them staggered around the room. Their arms locked around each other, knocking into the walls as each tried to break the other's grip. They slammed hard into the wreckage of the door and the impact transmitted up the wall, caused several rotting ceiling beams to give way and fall down on top of them.

Ginny scrambled for the machete as Jason forced Paul down onto the floor, pinning him with his knees. He retrieved the pickaxe and raised it high over his head so he could murder Paul. But, at that precise moment, Ginny lunged at him, bringing the machete down with all her might. She swung it like a butcher's maul, putting everything she had into the stroke. The blade whistled through the air and buried itself deep in Jason's shoulder, chopping through the trapezius muscle and the collar bone, almost separating his entire left arm and shoulder from his body. He did not utter a sound. He stiffened and then fell over to his side, sprawling on the floor with the machete imbedded deeply in his upper body. He lay, utterly still.

Ginny stood, transfixed, staring down at him. Paul got up beside her. For the first time, he took in the terrifying significance of the back room. The altar with its candles, the rotting severed head of Mrs. Voorhees, The bodies of the slain counselors.

He shook his head slowly, horrified at what he saw, not wanting

to believe it. Ginny slowly bent down, reaching for the hood over Jason's head. She bit her lower lip and grasped the hood then slowly pulled it off, revealing Jason's face. They both stared with horror and revulsion at the grotesque features of the monster who had stalked Camp Blood—a boy who had drowned and somehow came back from the dead to take revenge on all those who had wronged him and his mother.

"Jesus…" Paul said in a shocked whisper.

Ginny grasped his arm convulsively and shuddered. He took her by the shoulders and turned her away from the horrid sight.

"Let's go, Ginny," he said, supporting her with her arm across his shoulders. Paul helped her out of the cabin and back down the trail to the training center. She winced from the pain in her gashed leg as the sensation finally penetrated after the shock. She managed to stumble down to the stream with his help but then she finally collapsed, unable to continue. The pain was just too much to take.

She was biting her lip to keep from crying out. Paul could tell she was in agony. He knelt beside her to examine the wound. It looked pretty bad. They would have to do something about it soon before it became infected.

"Come on, I'll carry you," he said, picking her up in his arms. He managed to get her back to her cabin where he lowered her gently to the bed. He was exhausted and she was near the end of her rope.

Her eyes were squeezed tightly shut as she winced from the pain when he put her on the bed. He touched her face and she threw arms around him, sobbing as the full impact of her experience finally registered.

"Hey, you're all right," he said, holding her and kissing her, trying to calm her down. "It's over. You're okay, Ginny. You're all right." He hugged her close, stroking her hair to reassure her.

Suddenly, there was a noise outside. He felt Ginny stiffen in his arms as she stared, terror-stricken at the door. Paul glanced at the door, then looked at Ginny, sitting there, frozen with fear. She had gone almost completely white. He looked around for something to use as a weapon and his gaze fell on the splintered pitchfork Jason had left behind.

Paul picked it up and gave the part with the sharp tines to Ginny, taking the shorter part with the iron handle for himself. He held it in his left hand as a club, hefting it experimentally. It would just have to do.

Ginny took the busted pitchfork and braced it against the bed, holding it out before her like a spear.

Paul glanced at her and she nodded. Whatever happened now, they were as ready for it as they could be and at least they were

together.

He tiptoed over to the door and stood beside it, listening intently. He seemed to hear a soft scratching sound. He swallowed hard, reached out for the doorknob, took hold of it and raised the pitchfork handle high over his head. He twisted the knob and flung the door open and Teri's little dog, Muffin, mud spattered and completely soaked, trotted into the room. The ribbons in her fur were like wet noodles and she was filthy from being out in the storm. She jumped up into Paul's arms, her tongue lolling and her tail wagging happily.

"Muffin!" Paul said, picking her up.

Ginny put down the pitchfork as relief flooded through her.

"Muffin! Oh, Muffin. You're okay." She said. She reached out for the little dog and suddenly, the window behind her shattered into a thousand knife edged fragments as Jason came crashing through it. Ginny had a brief glimpse of the stunned, disbelieving expression on Paul's face. And then, she felt Jason's powerful arms encircle her. She saw his horribly ugly face. Tuffs of wispy hair, matted against his mostly bald and puckered scalp. Jutting, discolored, rotting teeth. His hideously deformed features and the awful smell of him like a corpse rising from the grave. And then, her vision blurred and everything went black as she fainted from stark terror.

Epilouge

She regained consciousness, tied down to a stretcher gurney as two attendants wheeled her towards an ambulance. It was daylight. She looked around, dazed, astonished to discover that she was still alive. There were flashing lights all around her and she could hear the crackle of a police radio. And then, she remembered with shocking clarity what had happened before she had passed out and she cried out.

"Paul! Where’s Paul?"

No one answered her. She struggled against the restraining straps as they loaded her into the ambulance without saying a word. She kept crying out for Paul as they shut the doors behind her and the ambulance pulled away, heading off down the dirt road back toward town and the county hospital.

The sheriff stood by his police cruiser, parked outside the cabin. His hands thrust into the pockets of his black leather jacket and his hat pulled low over his eyes as he watched the ambulance drive off.

They had found the others but so far they had not found Holt. There was no sign of him except some blood upon the floor in there. He sighed heavily.

Now, the shit would really hit the fan, he thought.

He’d have to call the poor parents of those murdered kids. The press would descend upon the town like vultures and they’d resurrect the story of Camp Blood. Everyone would want to know how the maniac had been able to live out there on the grounds of the old Camp without anyone spotting him and why he hadn’t been arrested. It would all have to fall on someone and it as sheriff, he would be elected. Everyone would wind up screaming for his hide.

He walked around to the back of the cabin and looked down at the large footprints in the mud.

Bastard, he thought.

He looked up and gazed up into the woods, thinking that you could put together the biggest drag net in three counties and comb these woods for months and never find him.

He exhaled heavily.

Damn, he thought, Another week and I’d have been packed and heading for Wyoming. Now, he could kiss the Wyoming job goodbye. It looked like he was stuck in Crystal Lake.

He shook his head with resignation.

Well, at least it was a friendly little town. Too bad there was no way out.

THE END…?